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# Olympiad Special

JAN TIMMAN REMEMBERS SVETOZAR GLIGORIC ★ EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW EUGENE TORRE ★ COLUMNS BY LUKE MCSHANE, HANS REE AND NIGEL SHORT

ISBN 978-90-5691-389-2

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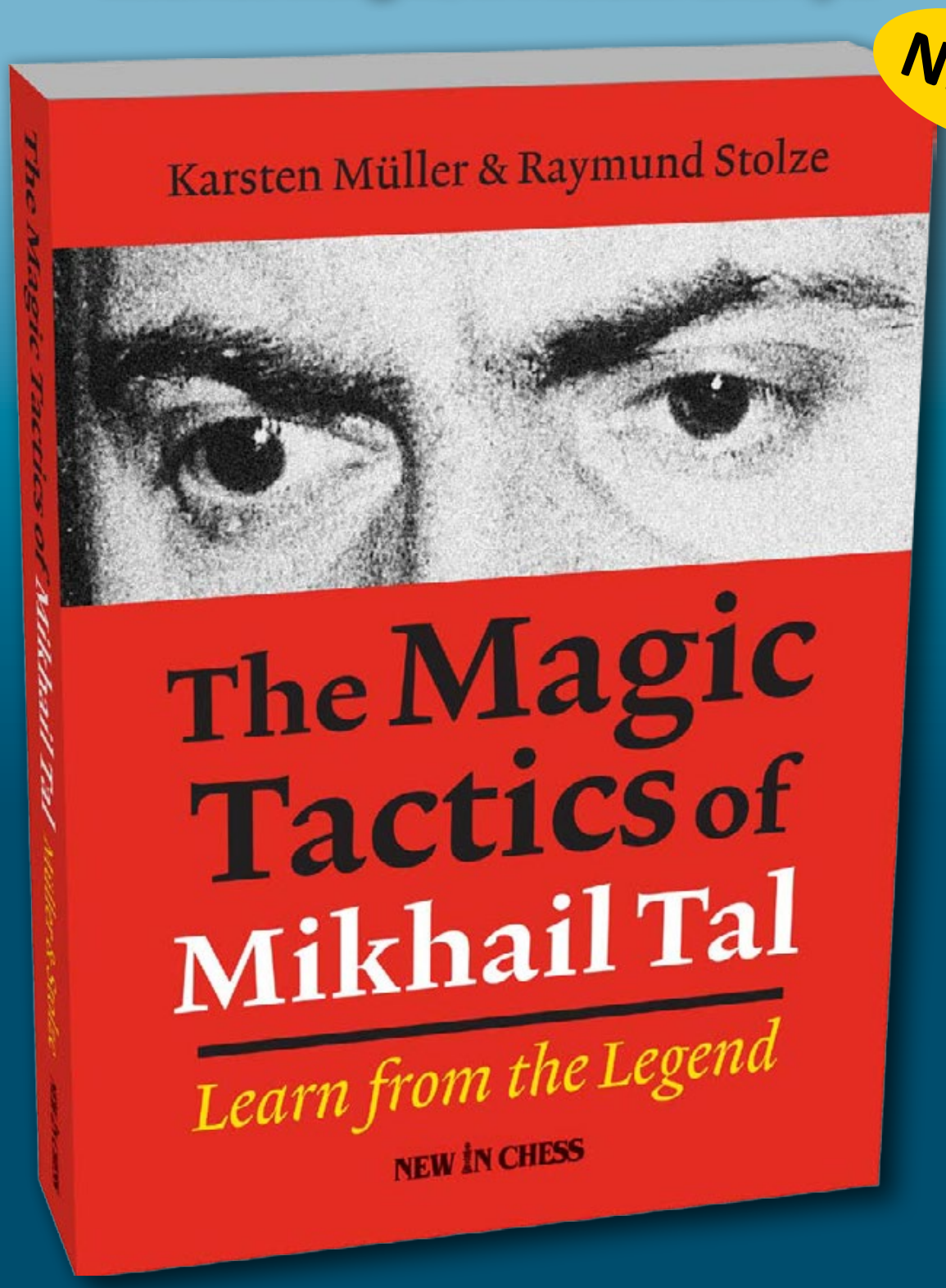


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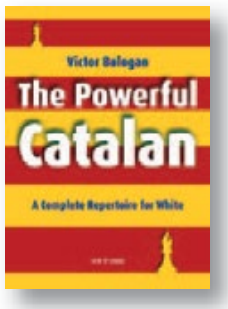


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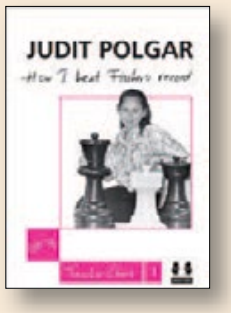


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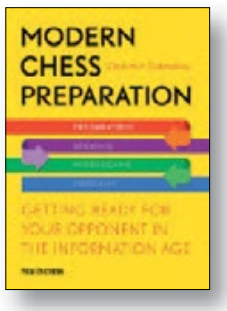


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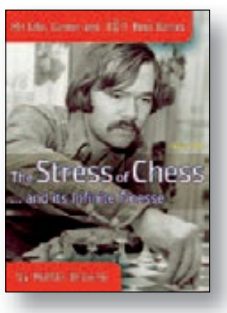


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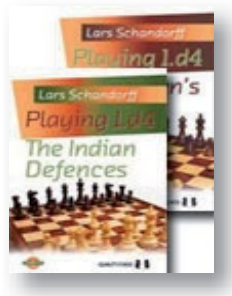


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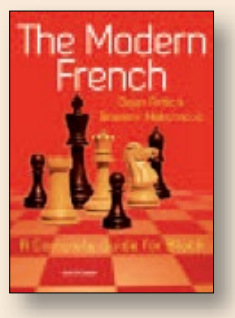


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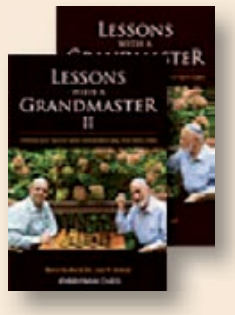


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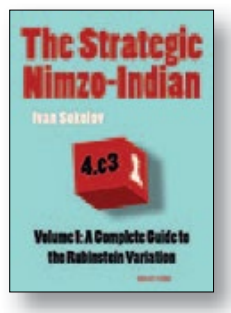


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2012 Issue 7

# NEW IN CHESS

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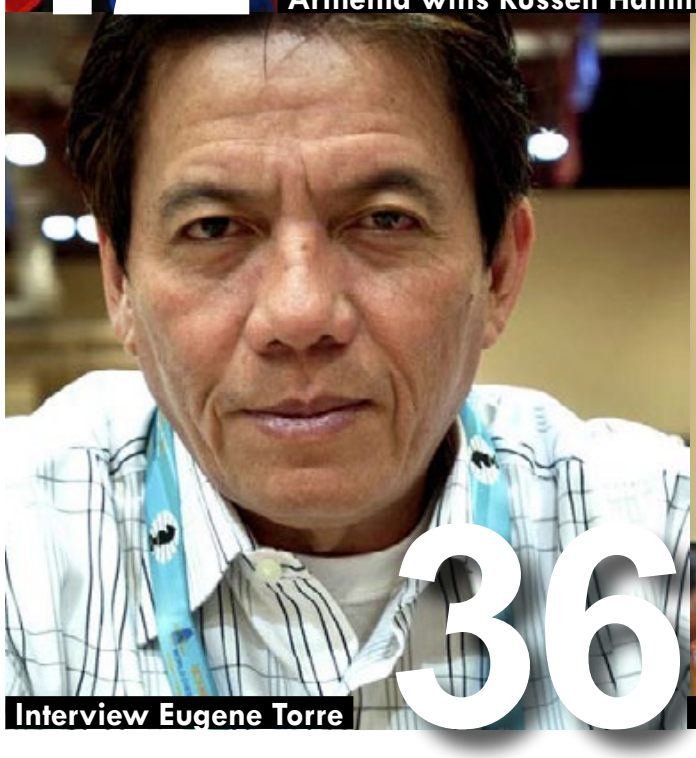

'I told Bobby, "Bobby, but how can we promote this Fischerandom? Because many hate your guts, you know." And he said, "I'll tell you Eugene. You can kill a good man, but you cannot kill a good idea."' – Eugene Torre

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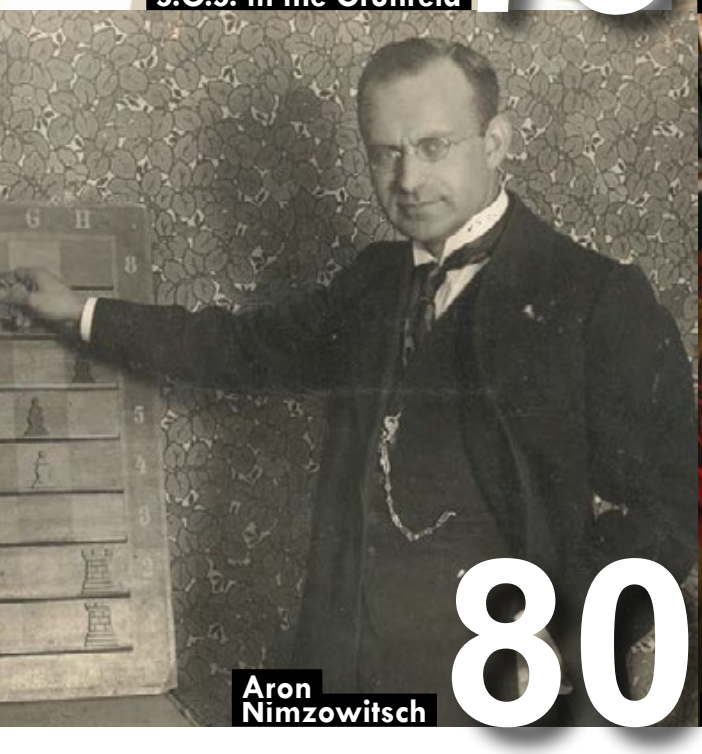

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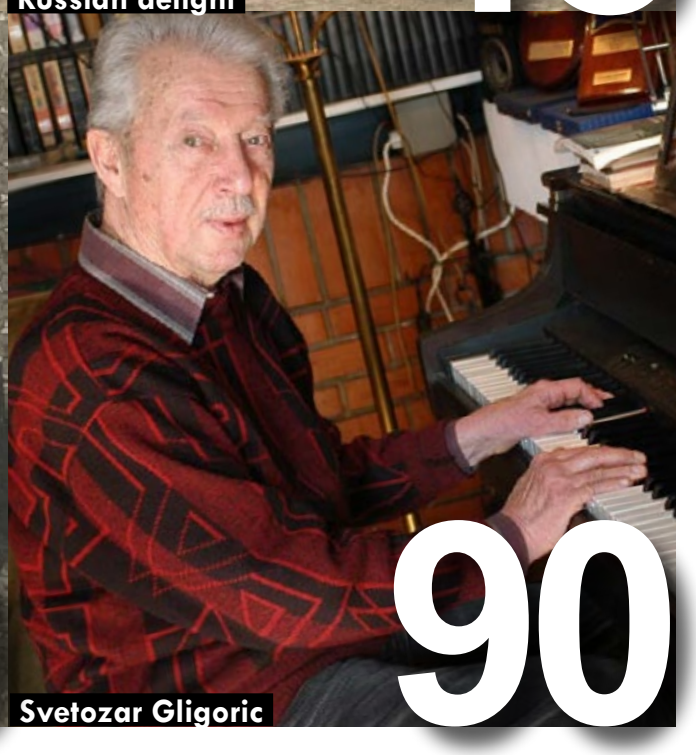

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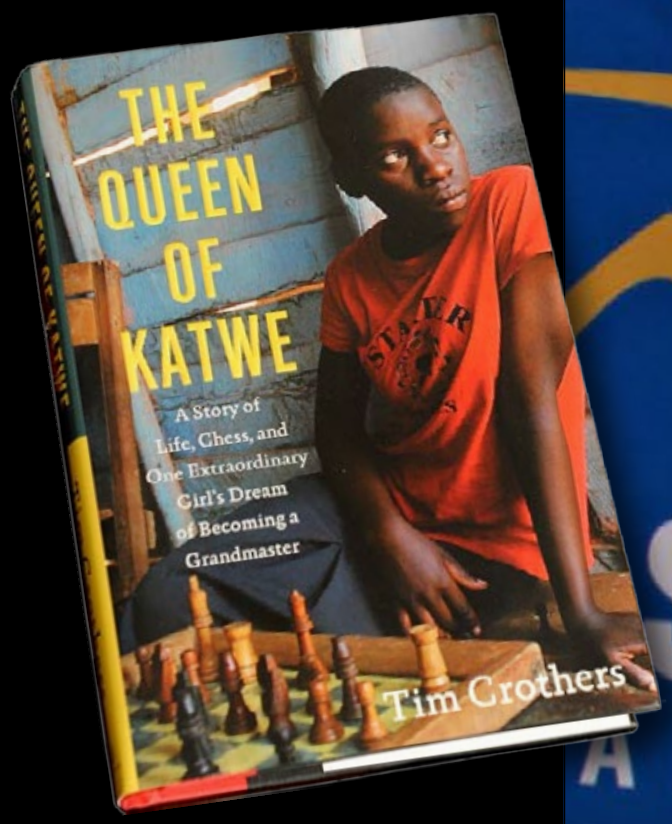
## The Queen of Katwe




**Having your picture taken with old and new friends remains highly popular at the Olympiad. This one is extra special. Four-times U.S. champion Irina Krush poses with Phiona Mutesi and Robert Katende. The 16-year-old Ugandan women's champion and her coach are the main protagonists in a new book by American sports journalist Tim Crothers. *The Queen of Katwe* tells the story of a girl living in the slums of Kampala who on a day, when she is searching for food, discovers chess and new prospects in life. Phiona's story (and that of Robert, which is just as gripping) is one of hope, but the book is far from a fairy-tale, as her struggle for a better future continues to this day. One reviewer described *The Queen of Katwe* as 'inspiring, thought-provoking and humbling'. We couldn't agree more. It's a must-read.**

# Queen Promotion

MACAULEY PETERSON

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Robert Katende

## Within the family

As at the Istanbul Expo Center the tension mounted in the penultimate round of the Olympiad, the FIDE Congress at the Polat Renaissance Hotel witnessed a moment that left many pinching themselves in disbelief. Seated on stage next to FIDE president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, Garry Kasparov addressed the General Assembly and spoke of 'a historic achievement'. What had happened?

One of the points on the agenda of the 83rd FIDE Congress was a review of the organization's statutes. Before the Olympiad, the 'old' statutes had been posted on the FIDE website and member federations had been invited to give their comments and suggestions. In a revealing show of their active involvement not one federation left a comment. The only one to accept the invitation to join the dialogue was Garry Kasparov. The most conspicuous member of the opposition against the current FIDE leadership arrived in Istanbul accompanied by Ank Santens of the New York law firm White & Case. For days they took part in the heated discussions, specifically defending their interests in any regulations connected to the Presidential elections in Tromsø in 2014. In a remarkably constructive atmosphere various compromises were hammered out. For instance, regarding the elections an important change was made about the proxy votes that caused such a mess at recent elections. It was decided that proxies should be delivered to the FIDE secretariat no later than two weeks before the General Assembly, giving the candidates a clear understanding of the electoral landscape 14 days prior to the actual elections.

Further compromises were reached concerning the number of vice-presidents (the president can nominate any number up to five, additionally a same number of vice-presidents will be elected by the members), the presidential ticket (from now on each ticket must be nominated by at least five member federations) and the CAS in Lausanne (which will remain the court of arbitration in case of disputes, but will be asked for a new provision regarding the costs of possible cases).

In his speech Kasparov made it clear that this rapprochement didn't mean that the hatchet had been buried, but that at least the rules for the coming electoral fights will be determined more clearly. 'We needed to make changes in the statutes to meet the demands of the 21st century. Of course there will be disagreements and fights and this is natural, but these fights should be within the family for the better of chess and for the better of FIDE.'

**Kasparov next to Ilyumzhinov: 'Of course there will be disagreements and fights.'**

## Mind you

Discussions about the nature of chess have always been popular. Let's see what the updated FIDE statutes have to say on this subject. In article 1.3 chess is described as 'a combination of sport, of scientific thinking and of elements of art'. Indeed, we've heard that one before! But is this still the view of our world federation? We're not sure, as this section of the statutes seems to have escaped the update. A bit further on it reads: 'The practice of the game of chess in all its ramifications is fully recognized as sport by the International Olympic Committee at the IOC session in Seoul, Korea in June 1999 and therefore any form of practice of the game of chess and any decision thereon by FIDE or any form of activity relating thereto either directly or indirectly falls within the definition of sport.'

It is certainly true that in 1999 the IOC recognized chess as a sport, but why is there no mention of the systematic review of the Sports Programme by the IOC in 2002? When the Olympic Programme Commission decided that chess was a 'mind sport' (just like bridge) and that Mind Sports should not be eligible for admission to the Programme, that is, be part of the Olympic Games?

## Eat that!

Mind sport or mind game doesn't sound that bad, does it? Especially if you realize what a good part of the hoi polloi out there think of chess as a sport. In a recent survey the *Philadelphia Daily News* tried to answer the question 'What is a sport' by a 'mathematical definition of sportitude'. In their survey they looked at athletic factors (physical effort and skill) and competitive factors (objectiveness of scoring and level of direct opposition, i.e. a direct confrontation of attack and defence). They not only looked at predictable sports such as football, basketball, boxing, swimming and many others you can think of, but also at more exotic pastimes such as arm wrestling, bull riding, competitive eating, beer pong and, indeed, chess. There were four categories you could end up in: Definitely a sport, probably a sport, grey area, and probably not a sport. Although chess scored very well in the competitive factor section (a 100%

**How many bites do you think ahead?**

score!), the athletic factors did us in. In the final ranking 'we' finished last but one (ahead of poker but clearly behind, amongst others, competitive eating) in the 'probably not a sport' group.

## We are all one sport

Chess has often been called the game of kings. And rightly so. Countless kings, presidents and leading politicians are known to have been avid practitioners of our game (or sport, if you like). While it is apparently common for such leaders to play chess, it is rather uncommon for expert chess players to join the ranks of our political leaders. But there are exceptions! In the Serbian government that was sworn in this summer, former World Championship Candidate Alisa Maric assumed the post of Minister of Youth

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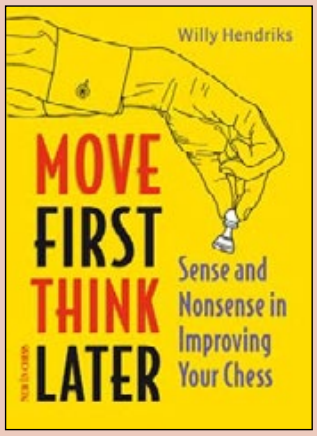
**Serbian Minister of Youth and Sport Alisa Maric.**

and Sport. Asked if she'd use her position to promote chess in her country, Mrs Maric gave a ministerial reply. It was her intention to work for the advancement of all sports!

## Sense and nonsense

Chess may not always be a match for competitive eating, still we're sure that our game remains a far richer source of inspiration for writers who try to fathom its mystery than most other sports and games. One of the most original books we have seen in the past years is Willy Hendriks' *Move First, Think Later* (true, *Eat First, Think Later* might also appeal to a vast readership) and we're not really surprised that his brainchild won the prestigious 2012 Book of the Year award of the English Chess Federation. Well-read in modern developments in neural research and learning theory, the author challenges accepted wisdoms with an open mind and happily presents his own findings to examine the sense and nonsense of ways to improve one's chess. In their report the judges write: 'Hendriks is also an entertaining writer with wit and a sense of humour, often against himself, which makes the book a pleasure to read.' What more do you want?




## Time management

A clever way to gain time on the clock during the Istanbul Olympiad was to wait for the moment your opponent got up to go to the toilet. While this strategy might cost you a couple of minutes in any other tournament, here it might result in time gains up to 20 minutes. Compared to the number of participants the number of toilets was so small that the Russian team joked that this was Silvio Danailov's dream Olympiad: long breaks inside the toilets were highly inadvisable, as you first had to queue to get in. Especially in the time-trouble phase it was amusing for the spectators to see the players dash away from their boards and come back running. Going by a sign on one of the ladies toilets we got the impression that the problem had been anticipated. The lady on the sign certainly looked more like one desperately waiting in front of a locked door than one walking away in relief.

## Like an idiot

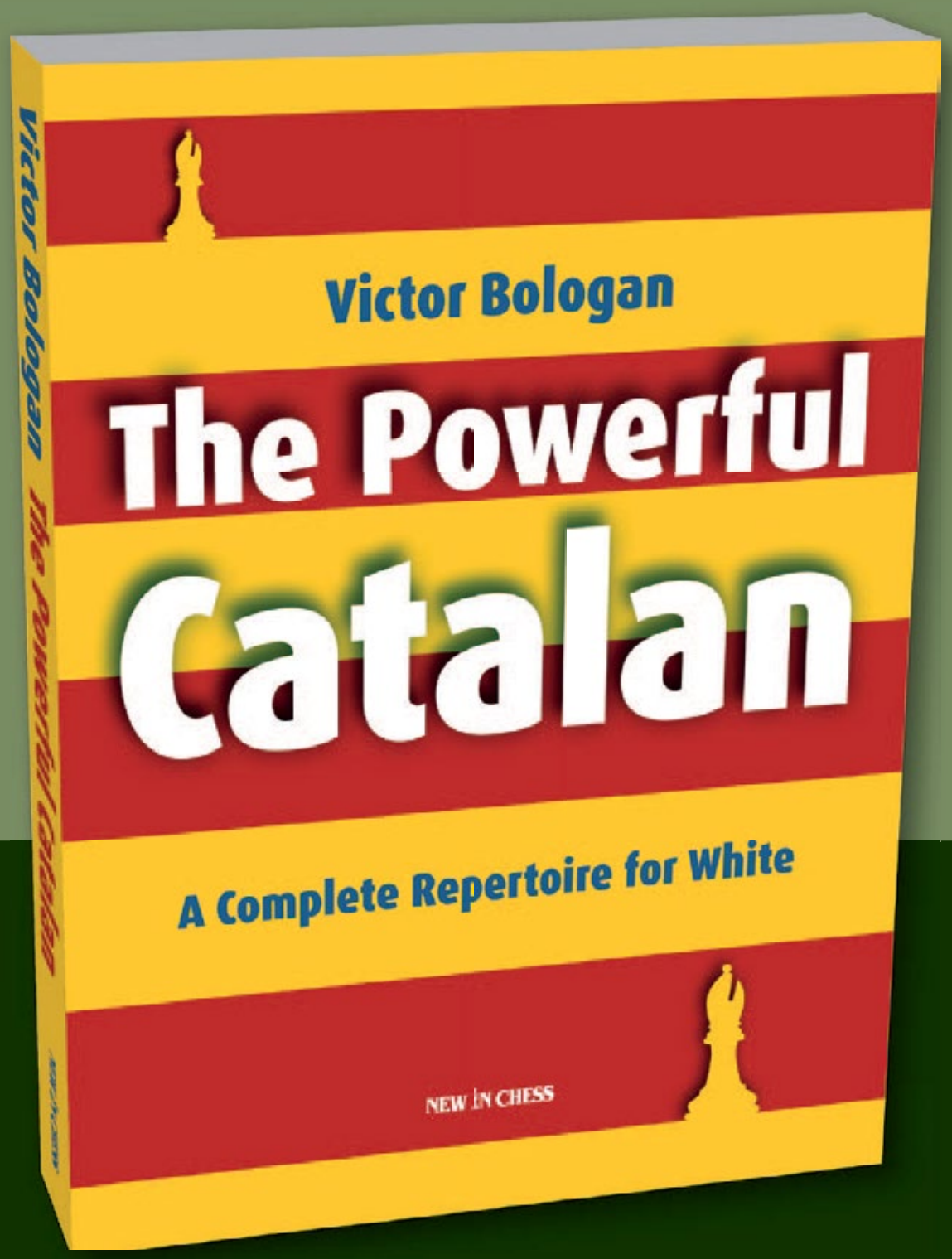
At the start of most rounds special guests visiting the Olympiad were invited to make the first move in one of the top games. An innocent formality that the players underwent patiently, smiling at the camera's and politely shaking hands with the VIP of the day. Unless your name is Vasily Ivanchuk. When Ali Nihat Yazici tried to introduce a new guest to the Ukrainian GM before the match Russia-Ukraine, Ivanchuk emphatically declined to be involved. The situation got painful

ANASTASYA KARLOVICH

**Ali Nihat Yazici fails to convince an agitated Vasily Ivanchuk.**

when his opponent, Vladimir Kramnik, followed suit and also left the table. At first it was believed that Kramnik did so because of Ali, perhaps in a reaction to the ban of his countryman Evgeny Surov from the venue, but as he later explained his action was aimed at his opponent. 'I didn't like the behaviour of Vasily. Especially because this was not the first time. He did the same before our game in Dortmund and somewhere else too. I think you should show some respect to the sponsors and organizers, but he always refuses and in quite a violent way. I was a bit tired of this, to sit there alone, like an idiot. His explanation that it is disturbing him I find very weak.' ■

# A world-class grandmaster on an important opening system!

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## Intellectual emotion

This is a letter to Walter Browne, whose book *The Stress of Chess* was published by New In Chess. Dear Walter, first of all congratulations on your book. Apparently you found the peace to sit down and write it. On page 67 you describe our one-minute game in 1976 for the most popular television program in the Netherlands at that time: *De Mies Bouwman Show*. That was very good propaganda for chess in general. But your memory goes another direction than mine. You write: 'Normally I'd always check the clock, but there was no time as the cameras were rolling and I certainly didn't sense any foul play in the air. How wrong I was!' Eventually you lost on time because my clock was out of order. It is a pity you have such memories. There was no foul play, because the drawing of colours was live before the game and the chess clock always has a fixed place in a studio. People at home saw quick hands, close-ups of pieces, overall shots, mimics (you were good there Walter), the ticking clock, Mies amazed, and suddenly the game was over. No one could see the game itself, it was intellectual emotion. The outcome was completely irrelevant.

A year or so ago I played a one-minute game with Magnus Carlsen for another popular program with millions of viewers. My pieces on the kingside fell on the board from time to time because the surface of the table was not level. So what, the outcome was again irrelevant (I lost). The funny thing is that hosts in general think that a one-minute game lasts one minute, so we had comments like '…how long it takes, one minute…'

Please, be kind to your memories Walter. In the end you win nothing by focussing on the irrelevant.

Hans Böhm
Hilversum, The Netherlands

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## A different game

I'd like to comment on Nigel Short's article in New In Chess 2012/6. First, I want to say that I agree with nearly everything Nigel said there; no draws by agreement until 40 moves, stalemate should be a win, and the 3 points per win, 1 per draw Bilbao scoring is very bad. But I think he missed the strongest argument against this scoring system. Very simply, such tournaments should not be ratable!

The reason is very clear. Suppose I ran a tournament where prizes were awarded based on 1 point per loss, half per draw, and none per win. In other words, a 'loser's chess' tournament. Would FIDE rate that? Of course not. The players need to have the same goals as the rating system assumes. Well, the Bilbao system is not as bad as this, but the problem is the same! The rating system treats two draws as equal to a win and a loss, and any scoring system that does otherwise is incompatible with it; they are playing a different game. Has anyone even discussed this issue at or with FIDE?

For round robins, I think the best solution is to use standard scoring, but break ties by number of wins. This is equivalent to scoring 0.5 per draw and 1.01 per win, which is close enough to normal to be ratable unless you are a purist, and is easily justified if there are good reasons to want/need clear winners. But my preferred solution is to require draws to be replayed once (with reversed colours) after a meal break, perhaps with one hour plus 30". Players who draw a lot will have to work harder, instead of getting free days, and the percentage of pairings ultimately drawn will go way down, while keeping the burden of avoiding draws on White, where it belongs.

Larry Kaufman
Potomac, MD, USA

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# Superb Aronian leads Armenia to gold

**For the third time in six years cheering fans took to the streets of Yerevan to prepare a heroes' welcome for Levon Aronian and his men. To his left Gabriel Sargissian and Tigran Petrosian, to his right Sergei Movsesian and team captain Arzhak Petrosian.**

ARMAN KARAKHAYAN

As the seventh round of the Olympiad is approaching the first time-control, Ali Nihat Yazici briskly heads for the entrance of the playing area. At the security check he abruptly stops. He wants to be checked. Thoroughly. With his legs slightly apart, his arms spread wide and his eyes sternly locked on an imaginary horizon, he urges the guard to frisk him. What does he want to demonstrate? That he, the chief organizer of the event, is not above the rules that all the participants have to abide by? That he, who almost single-handedly put Turkey on the chess map, has remained humble and is no different from anyone else?

Yazici, or Ali, as everyone calls him, has a penchant for the theatrical. Instead of letting his amazing achievements in Turkish chess do the talking, he wants to tell the world what he is thinking and feeling. Just as easily as he changes from suit and tie into jeans and t-shirt, he changes from prominent chess official into a street fighter. A book could be filled with his

**Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam**

Who was going to stop the Russians at the 40th Chess Olympiad in Istanbul? Led by newly appointed success coach Yuri Dokhoian, the odds-on favourites steamrollered the field in the first week. Finally, after a 10-year drought, the Hamilton Russell Cup would be theirs again. At least, that's what it looked like until a slip-up against USA in Round 9 created a whole new scenario. The race was open again and in an ultra-tight finish the top-seeds were edged out by Olympiad specialists Armenia. For the third time in six years cheering fans took to the streets of Yerevan to prepare a heroes' welcome for Levon Aronian and his men. An extremely happy Aronian: 'I had told several journalists that it would be hard, because I considered ourselves to be the favourites this time.'

NEW IN CHESS

**The Istanbul Expo Center, at a stone's throw from Atatürk Airport, was the venue of the 40th Olympiad.**

undiplomatic and aggressive open letters and public statements. Before the Olympiad he dramatically resigned as FIDE vice-president, hoping that would help FIDE in the Lausanne court case about the illegality of the number of vice-presidents. Or was he secretly hoping for Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's refusal to accept his resignation and the public support from the FIDE president for his person that indeed followed? Shocking was Ali's decision as president of the Turkish Chess Federation not to invite arbiters to the Olympiad from the seven countries that together with Karpov had sued FIDE in 2010. Perhaps his indignation about the one million dollars that this case cost FIDE in legal fees could be understood, but how could one understand an act of revenge that was in conflict with the FIDE statutes? Miraculously, the FIDE leadership remained silent about this offence against their Gens Una Sumus principle and despite protests from the countries in question did nothing to lift this ban on their arbiters. Next, in the General Assembly, Ali came up with a proposal to make the federations of these seven countries pay for FIDE's legal fees.

Another victim who will remember the 'Alimpiad' for some years to come, is Evgeny Surov, the editor of the popular Russian site chess-news.ru. When Surov arrived in Istanbul he was told that there had been an order not to let him in. The reason given was that he was not a journalist, but it is more likely that an article critical of Ali on Surov's website played a role. After all he was told that he was not welcome as a spectator either. Here, too, the passivity of the FIDE leadership was baffling. A letter by the Russian Chess Federation and a petition by prominent players to let Surov do his work were simply ignored. Repeated attempts by Surov, who stubbornly stayed in Istanbul, to enter the venue were unsuccessful. Only on the final day the guards apparently had forgotten what he looked like, and he attended the prize-giving without any problems.

On the eve of the 40th Olympiad Ali Nihat Yazici openly admitted that this jubilee edition was not going to be the milestone in his career that he had hoped for. When four years ago Istanbul won the bid for the 2012 Olympiad, they proudly showed a multi-million euro guarantee from the Turkish Sports Ministry. As it turned out, this guarantee had to be taken with a grain of salt. A government change produced a new sports minister and he, less of a chess aficionado than his predecessor, reduced his contribution by 50 per cent.

Realistically, Ali said that it would no longer be the best Olympiad of all time, but certainly an Olympiad well worth remembering. The main change was that unlike in 2000, when the Olympiad was held in the centre of Istanbul, close to the tourist attractions, the venue and the players' hotels were now close to Ataturk Airport. In a new developing area around the World Trade Centre, that the participants will mainly remember for an intricate maze of motorways and the permanent roar of airplanes taking off. As one of the Russian players put it, 'We felt as if in prison. Every day we were briefly let out to get some air.'

To cover transportation costs all participants were asked to pay a 100 euro entrance fee. Journalists were charged the same amount, until a Bulgarian sports journalists protested and explained that in his long career he never ever had to pay such a fee. A further cash cow for the organizers were the costly upgrades to single rooms, a recurring bone of conten-

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**A man with a mission, who doesn't shun undiplomatic language. Ali Nihat Yazici tells it straight to a journalist.**

tion at Olympiads. Perhaps the cost-saving measure that invoked most criticism, even though little money was involved, was the fact that in the playing hall simple refreshments like water, tea and coffee were not complimentary. On the bright side, Internet in the hotels was offered free, but invariably the connections were slow and in some hotels the Internet went down for as long as 24 hours. We don't have to explain how that affected the mood of the guests.

As also happened in Khanty-Mansiysk, most of the initial complaints were gradually silenced by the extremely friendly and ever-helpful staff and volunteers, and by the happiness to be part of the biggest chess event in the world. Moreover, Hall 9 of the Istanbul Expo Center was more than spacious enough for the record number of participating teams. In the 'Open' competition a staggering 152 countries took part, while the Women's section welcomed teams from 122 countries. Instead of summing up who was there, it is easier to mention the few notable absentees. World number one Magnus Carlsen skipped Istanbul after his lacklustre performance in Khanty-Mansiysk. Much as he likes to hang out with his buddies, Carlsen discovered that it's a tough psychological challenge to motivate yourself when your team is not fighting for any of the top places. For similar reasons World Champion Vishy Anand has not been seen at Olympiads for quite some years now, and he also happily skipped this one.

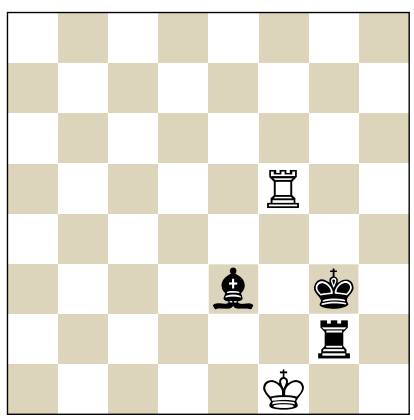
One top-10 player, Alexander Morozevich, was absent involuntarily for health reasons. This forced new Russian team captain Yuri Dokhoian to look for a last-minute replacement after he had already decided himself to replace star player Peter Svidler, who had not been very fortunate in a couple of team events. Still, the Russian team with Kramnik, Grischuk and Karjakin on top boards were the clear favourites. With good reason they came fully motivated to end the

NEW IN CHESS

**Persona non grata Evgeny Surov rose to instant fame. On the final day he finally managed to sneak in for the closing ceremony.**

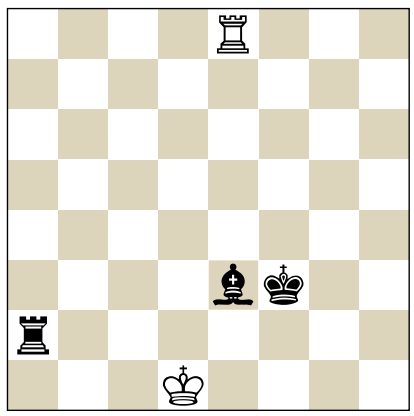
frustrating drought they had suffered from since Bled 2002, the last Olympiad at which Russia, led by Garry Kasparov, won the Hamilton-Russell Cup. Statistically they had the strongest team, they were convinced they had the best coach on earth, and with the financial (think a $50,000 bonus per player for gold) and logistical (think superfast computers) support of the Russian Chess Federation it seemed that little could go wrong.

Like a stampede Russia trampled one opponent after the other. After eight rounds few doubted they wouldn't fulfill their mission. Russia was two match points ahead of China, Armenia, USA, Germany and the Philippines(!). What is more, with only three rounds to go they had already faced most of their rivals. They beat China, Hungary, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, and only settled for one tie, against Armenia. The last difficult hurdle they faced in Round 9. If they defeated the USA, the rest would be plain sailing. The start of the match was encouraging, but gradually fatigue began to take its toll. You'd only have to look at the pale faces of Kramnik and Grischuk to understand how much they'd invested in the previous rounds. And this is not a state to be in when you're sitting opposite two hungry opponents. Hikaru Nakamura always enjoys his clashes with Kramnik and was doubly motivated, as one day earlier he had crossed Bobby Fischer's 2785 top rating. Gata Kamsky also gave a Fischeresque twist to his game by surprising Grischuk with the Alekhine Defence. Kramnik lost his way in the middle game and was gradually pushed to the brink. Grischuk's fate was even more painful. He failed to defend the infamous rook and bishop vs. rook endgame and dropped half a point that would have far-reaching consequences.



**Grischuk-Kamsky**
position after 56...♔xg3

**57.♖e5** One of seven moves that draw. **57...♖f2+ 58.♔e1 ♔f4 59.♖e8** Again one of seven moves that draw. As a rule of thumb, moving as far away as possible to the back rank is a sensible thing to do for the defender. **59...♖a2 60.♔d1** Here there are no fewer than nine drawing moves. The text is principally correct, as White attempts to escape from the black king. **60...♔f3**



Setting up a concrete threat. **61.♖e7?** Inexplicably White leaves the back rank. There are three ways to pre-

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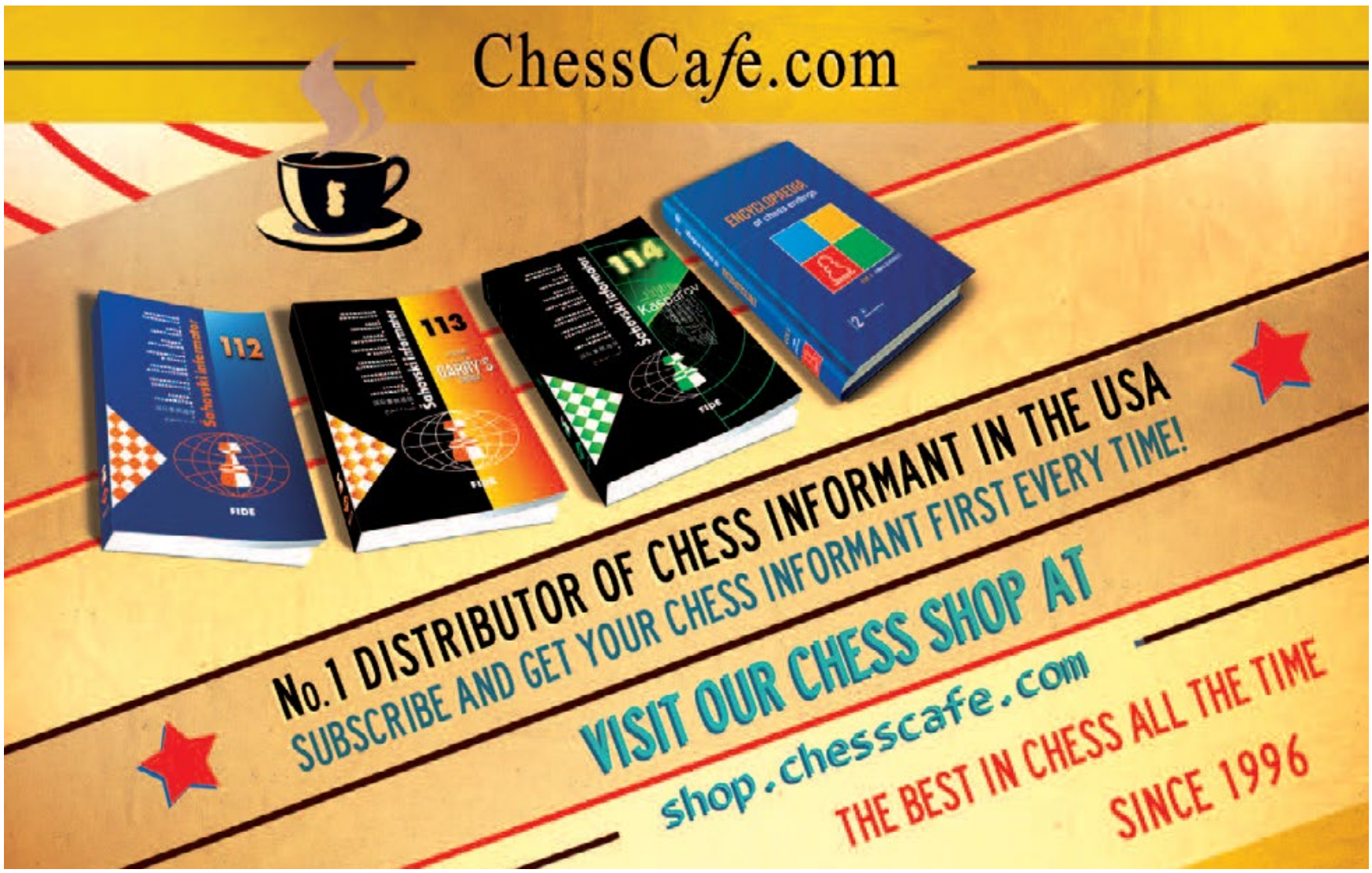
**As if he already senses the disaster looming in the endgame, Alexander Grischuk contemplates Gata Kamsky's opening surprise: the Alekhine Defence.**

vent Black's plan. The easiest defence is covering the d-file with 61.♖d8 or 61.♖f8+ ♗f4 62.♖d8. More difficult, but equally viable is 61.♖h8 ♖d2+ 62.♔e1 ♖d7 63.♖h3+, chasing the black king away and creating breathing space for his own king. Now beware of 63.♖f8+? ♗f4 64.♖f5 ♖e7+ 65.♔d1 ♖c7!. and the mating net is completed. No lesson about this ending is complete without pointing out the second rank defence, e.g. 63.♖h2 ♖e7 64.♔f1 ♖a7 and now 65.♖f2+. Due to this stalemate motif Black cannot maintain the favourable 'opposition'. **61...♖d2+ 62.♔e1 ♖d8** Suddenly there is no defence against ♖d8-c8-c1 mate. **63.♖f7+ ♗f4 64.♖f6** Or 64.♖b7 ♗g3+ 65.♔f1 ♖d1 mate. **64...♖c8** White resigned.

Those who think that a player of Grischuk's stature is not aware of the finesses of this important endgame, we may remind of Bilbao 2009, where he held out for 39 moves against Karjakin and netted half a point with the second rank stalemate defence. This caused Garry Kasparov to observe on page 20 of New In Chess Yearbook 100: 'impeccable defence by Grischuk'.

This time Kasparov was amongst the spectators and was less amused to see his countrymen complicate their task. Although they remained in the shared lead and kept the best chances they were no longer fully in control of their fate, because of the tiebreaker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**The Armenians only minutes after they've heard that they did it again. Team captain Arzhak Petrosian, Tigran 'supersub' Petrosian, top scorer Levon Aronian, 'Uncle' Vladimir Akopian, Sergei 'God' Movsesian and Gabriel 'not to be left out' Sargissian.**

that would be applied if teams finished with the same number of match points.

In the penultimate round Russia did what they had to do and beat the surprising Argentineans 2½-1½. With one round to go they were tied for first with Armenia, always a force to be reckoned with at Olympiads, and China. With Wang Hao on first board and young star Ding Liren scoring happily, the Chinese seemed to be steering for their best result ever.

In spite of the reversal of fortune in Round 9, Vladimir Kramnik kept believing in the chances of the Russian team. While anything could happen in the final matches between China and Ukraine, and Hungary and Armenia, he didn't doubt that Russia would deal with Germany.

Indeed this was the first of the key matches to end, with Russia comfortably winning 3-1 thanks to Kramnik and Karjakin. Then hours of nail-biting followed for the Russians, who watched the remaining games in a cafeteria. China no longer worried them, as Ukraine played a great match. On first board, Vasily Ivanchuk showed the way with a brilliant win against Wang Hao, and with a clear 3-1 the defending champions claimed the bronze medals.

In the match between Hungary and Armenia, the Russians' hopes were pinned on Judit Polgar, who kept trying to break the defences of Vladimir Akopian. The position looked terribly drawish, but Kramnik and his men kept believing that Akopian's task was not that easy. Or tried to convince themselves that this was so. Armenia was leading 2-1 thanks to a win by Movsesian against Almasi. Akopian didn't budge and after 94 moves Polgar ceased her efforts and agreed a draw. Both Armenia and Russia finished with 19 match points.

Still, the wait was not over. Which team would the tiebreaker, based on the results of your opponents, favour:

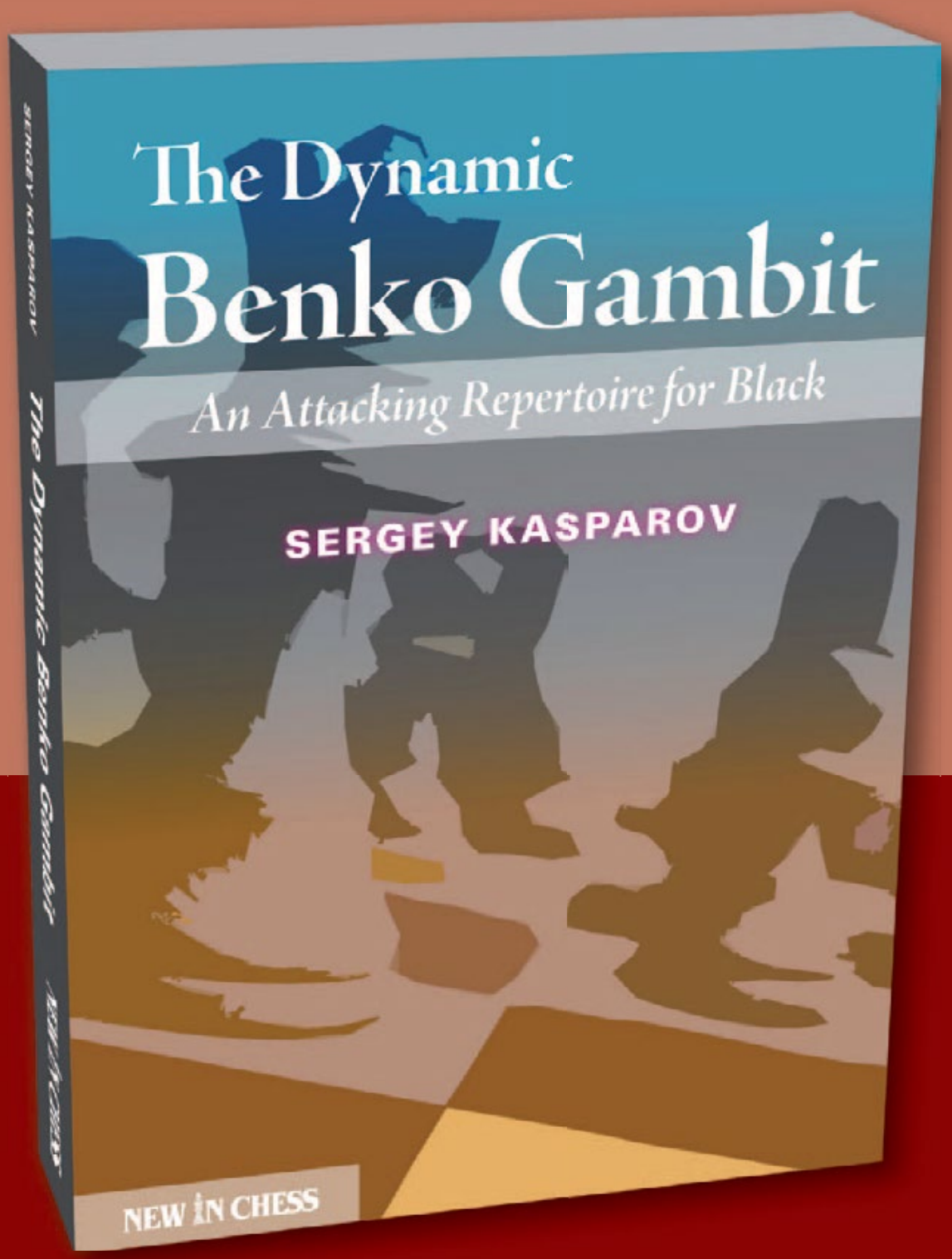
> Vladimir Kramnik: 'Personally I think, without any arrogance, that we were the best team in this Olympiad.'

Armenia or Russia? The new system created a peculiar situation. After all matches had been finished I boarded the shuttle bus to my hotel. 'Who won the Olympiad?' a fellow passenger asked. I had to confess that I had no idea, as the arbiters were still calculating.

When the final verdict came, soon shouts of joy must have filled the streets of Yerevan. Once again, for the third time, Armenia had won the Olympiad. With the smallest of margins they topped the favourites from Russia. Apparently, it was the 3-1 win of the Netherlands over Argentina in the last round that did the Russians in. Another last-round result that didn't help the Russians was the huge loss, ½-3½, that Greece suffered against Italy. Had this match between two more or less equal teams ended in 2-2, it seems that Russia would also have been the lucky ones.

Now, once again they had to lick their wounds. As Kramnik put it: 'Humanly we both deserve gold medals, but sport is sport, somebody has to win. In our minds we won it together with Armenia. Personally I think, without any arrogance, that we were the best team in this Olympiad. All of us have this feeling of a certain satisfaction of the job we did.

# Do you want to attack with Black?

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We fully deserved to win, but luck was against us. Both in Khanty-Mansiysk and now we were the only team who played against all major rivals. Even Armenia didn't play some very tough matches. They didn't meet Azerbaijan or the USA. And we played all of them. This is just luck.'

Late at night, after the closing ceremony, and after he had posed for photographs with countless admirers and handed out countless autographs, I sat down with Levon Aronian, whom I'd rarely seen so happy. He, too, had always kept believing in the chances of his team, even after they lost to China in Round 7.

'Actually, before the Olympiad I told several journalists that it would be hard, because I considered ourselves to be the favourites this time. We were kind of shaky at the start, but then when locomotion was on the way we really showed team play. If one played badly somebody else played well. We've been working together, me, Sergei (Movsesian) and Gabriel (Sargissian), for already quite some time. So basically our openings are interchangeable and they're not so bad. And we help Akopian with his openings and our reserve player is also a good player. So I thought, if everything goes according to plan, we win this event. And so it happened.

'Russia were playing really well, but no team can keep up this tempo. I was thinking that things might go wrong for them, it's almost a natural law, you can't play a tournament and crush everybody, especially now that Olympiads are pretty strong nowadays.'

*You have a closely-knit team. Does this atmosphere compensate for the difference in rating with the Russians?*

'In general it's harder for teams that have different kinds of leaders. Russia has many good players, and everybody can play on Board 1. I mean, there has to be some tension in competition between the members if you have four or five elite players. That's my guess. In our team there are some forbidden words and phrases, such as "tired" or "my opponent is strong" (laughs).'

*How would you describe the roles of your team mates?*

'We have the joke in the team that Sergei (Movsesian) is God, because he either takes or gives. Like in the European championship he lost and took, but here he gave. He lost against China and then he won against Russia. So basically everything depends on him (laughs long). In general, his presence in the team gives this kind of vibe, this aliveness. And I love sitting next to him. Most of the time he surprises me, I mean pleasantly.

**Levon Aronian: 'We have the joke in the team that Sergei Movsesian is God, because he either takes or gives.'**

Because he has a very different style from mine and Gabriel's. So sometimes I look at it and I say, oh, he's done it again. And then I realize that he played very well and that I didn't understand (laughs).

'Vladimir (Akopian) we call Uncle. He is a solid guy and in team events he becomes, I don't know, fifteen years younger. He's very alive, he makes lots of jokes. And he's just happy about playing anybody. He's not afraid of anybody. He has this joke, when he has to play somebody he should take seriously. He looks at this opponent and says, that's an easy job. All the time. He's very lighthearted, that gives us lots of joy too.

'Gabriel (Sargissian) is the one person who can never be left out of the team, that's what I feel. He may have bad days, he may be depressed sometimes, but in general he is the guy who comes and does his job and he can really outplay his opponents easily. I would actually think he is the soul of the team. In individual competitions he cannot force himself, because he is the laziest guy. In team championships we really make him angry by forcing him to play. We would never get our results without him. He's my generation. It was me, him and Tigran Petrosian, who played here in Istanbul and won the Junior Olympiad in '98. So it was kind of funny that three of the team got back.

'Tigran (Petrosian) always puts us in a good mood. He is an interesting player and it is good that he didn't get depressed because we were using our system, playing with four players. (Petrosian only played the first three rounds – DJtG.) Yes, if nobody is sick, it's the team of the champions and we're absolutely confident.'

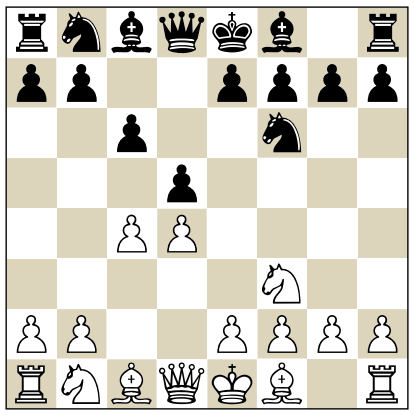
With a score of 7 out of 10, and a performance rating of 2849, Levon Aronian won the individual gold medal on Board 1. That he is the real soul of the Armenian team nobody doubts. His countrymen expect a lot from him and so far he has been giving generously.

At the FIDE Congress the 2014 Olympiad was awarded to Baku. Before the vote, Smbat Lputian held an emotional plea not to hold the Olympiad in a place where his countrymen would not feel comfortable because of the strained relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. On stage, honorary FIDE vice-president Vanik Zakarian bluntly stated that his national team would not go despite the guarantees of the organizers that they would be safe and welcome. In four years a lot can change. We wouldn't like to see an Olympiad with one of the most colourful teams in its history missing.

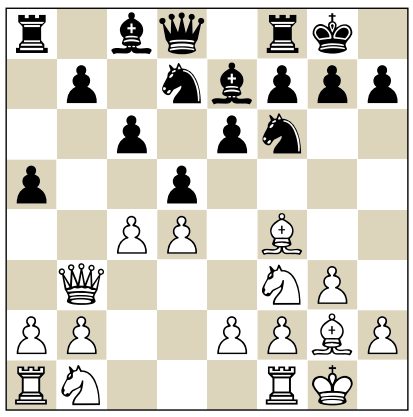
NOTES BY
**Levon Aronian**

SL 1.4 – D11
**Anish Giri**
**Levon Aronian**
Istanbul 2012 (10)

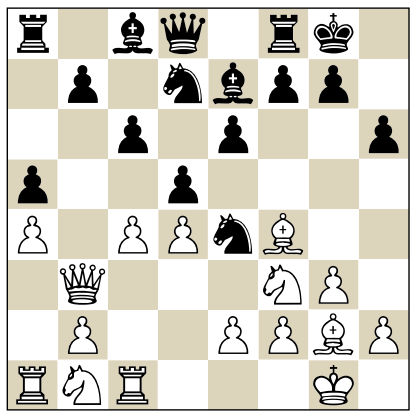
**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6**



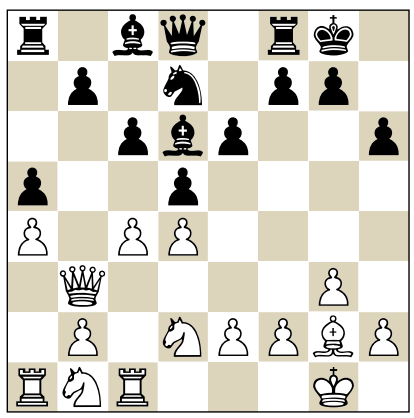
**4.♕b3**
People are divided into two categories. After 4.♕c2 some are afraid of the move 4...g6 and place their queen on b3, while others are not afraid.
**4...e6** At the team discussion before the match we decided to aim for a large-scale battle. It was for this reason that the variation 4...dxc4 5.♕xc4 ♗f5, which I consider to be the most reliable, was not employed.
**5.g3**
Transposing into a Catalan Opening.
**5...♗e7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 ♘bd7**
On the whole, players with black prefer to develop with ...b6 and ...♗b7, but since I myself had previously played the variation with ♕b3 as White, the set-up with ...♘bd7 and ...a5 was known to me.
**8.♗f4 a5**



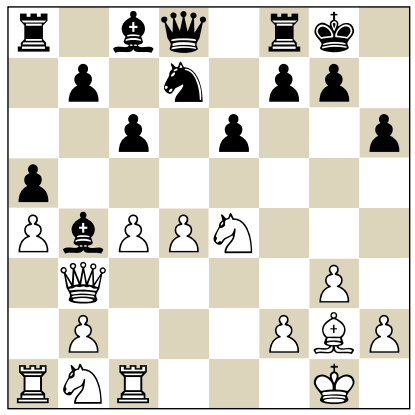
**9.♖c1** In such positions White usually does not develop his b1-knight earlier than he needs to. For example, after 9.♘c3 a4 Black achieves an advantageous exchange of pawns, while after 9.♘bd2 ♘h5 10.♗e3 f5 he gains active play involving the ...f4 advance.
**9...h6**
According to Nigel Short's apt expression, this is a 'f**k you' move. I no longer had any useful moves, and the time had come to wait.
**10.a4** Although this move is not the strongest, it does not seriously spoil the position. During the game I was more expecting a move such as 10.h3.
**10...♘e4** The idea of playing the knight to d6 appealed to me, and after calculating the variations I did not find any reason to avoid it.



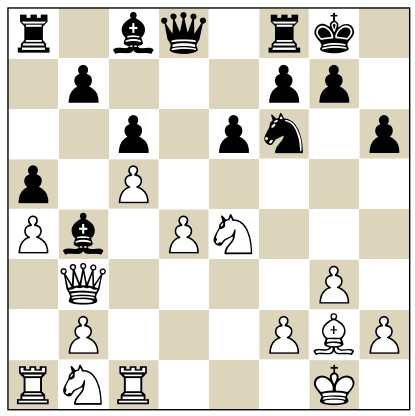
**11.♘fd2**
If 11.♘bd2 I had prepared 11...g5 12.♗e3 ♘d6 followed by 13...♘f5. As an unwritten rule in such positions states, after Black has exchanged his knight for the dark-squared bishop he cannot have any problems.
**11...♘d6 12.♗xd6 ♗xd6**



**13.e4**
An interesting move. After the more tedious 13.♘c3 or 13.e3 the position is absolutely equal.
**13...dxe4 14.♘xe4**
Quite a good alternative was provided by 14.c5 ♗c7 15.♘xe4 ♘f6, with an interesting game, in which Black's chances are not worse.
**14...♗b4**
The more restrained 14...♗e7 or 14...♗c7 would also have given Black comfortable play, but I chose the move in the game because it gives more chances of seizing the initiative.



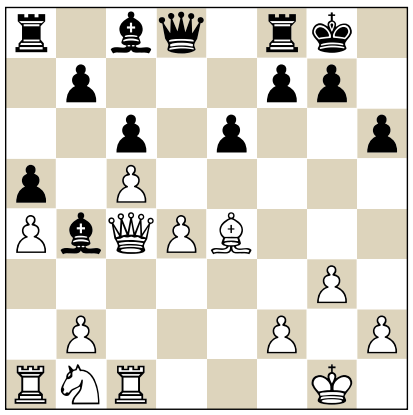
**15.c5**
The only move. It would be stupid to allow Black to calmly play …e5.
**15...♘f6**
After 15...e5 16.♘bc3 exd4 17.♘a2 the white pieces would have come into play.
After playing 15...♘f6 I held my breath and posed the question – would the very talented but still young player be able to find a positional decision that would take the game along its logical course?



**16.♕c4**
A mistake. When immediately after the game Anish asked me where he had gone wrong, I pointed out to him

that after 16.♘d6 ♘e8 17.♘xc8 followed by the defence of the d4-pawn White would have gained equality. Despite the fact that at the present moment the c8-bishop is not a very attractive piece, after Black plays ...e5, together with the b4-bishop it will constitute a powerful force.

**16...♘xe4 17.♗xe4**

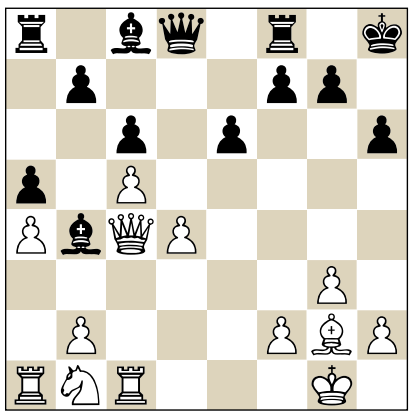


**17...♔h8**

After the game many of my friends, who were following the play, criticized this move. As the computer shows, after 17...e5 18.d5 cxd5 19.♗xd5 ♕e7 Black's position is very good. I can only add that even so I consider 17...♔h8 to be the best decision, since from the practical point of view it is clear that after it White has to continue playing the role of the weaker side.

**18.♗g2**

18.♘a3 or 18.♘c3 would after ...e5 have led to similar positions, since White has no way of replying to ...e5 other than with d5. After White captures the e5-pawn, the black bishop comes out to e6 and the white c5- and e5-pawns become easy targets for the black pieces.



With a score of 7 out of 10, and a performance rating of 2849, Levon Aronian, the soul of the Armenian team, won the individual gold medal on Board 1.

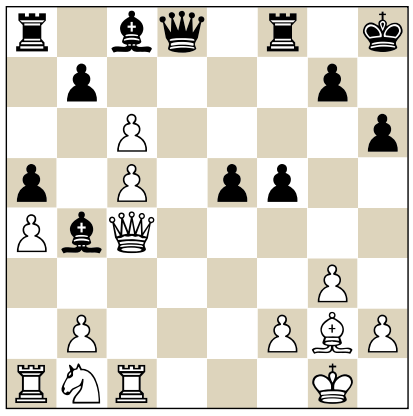


**18...e5 19.d5 f5**

As was also the case earlier, I avoid giving White the chance to place his bishop on d5.

**20.dxc6**

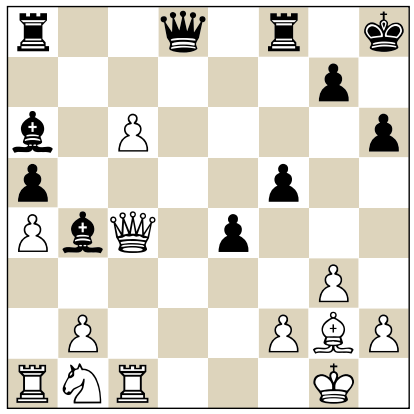
My opponent decided that if he was going to suffer, then at least it would be for a pawn. This decision would deserve to be criticized if White had an acceptable alternative. After Black plays ...e4, White's position becomes unhealthy.



**20...e4 21.cxb7 ♗xb7 22.c6**

White cannot avoid this, since on c5 the pawn is easily lost.

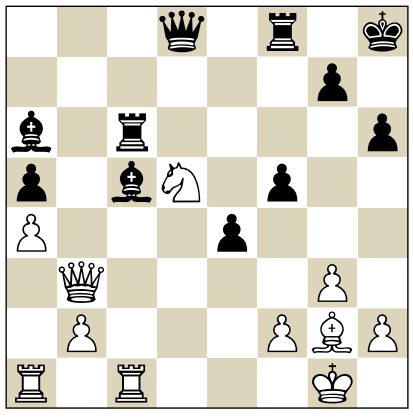
**22...♗a6**



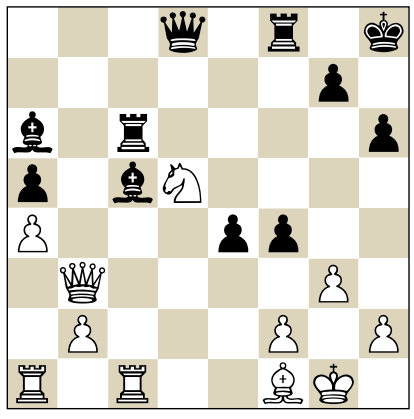
**23.♕b3**

Somewhere here I think Anish realized that after 23.c7 Black can reply 23...♗xc4 24.cxd8♕ ♖axd8 25.♖xc4 ♖d1+ 26.♗f1 f4. It is easy to see that the restricted white army is powerless to undertake anything against the invasion of the black pieces.

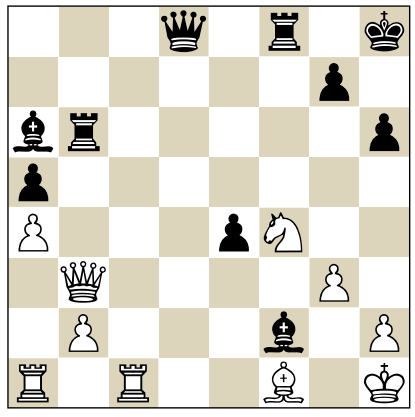
**23...♖c8 24.♘c3** In this way White acquires some activity.
**24...♖xc6 25.♘d5 ♗c5**
The rook on c6 is an important piece for Black, since it is controlling the g6-square. Of course, I could not exchange it for the passive rook on a1.



**26.♗f1** A logical move. After the other logical move 26.♖c3, apart from the solid 26...♕d6 Black can reply with the pretty 26...♗c4 27.♖xc4 ♕xd5, with advantage.
**26...f4** Of course, it was simpler to play 26...♗xf1, with a solid plus, but I wanted to gain a material advantage as quickly as possible, in order to hearten the team.



**27.♘xf4**
The decisive mistake. White was obliged to give up the exchange by 27.♖xc5, although after 27...♖xc5 28.♘xf4 ♖c6 Black also has good winning chances.
It should be mentioned that 27.♗xa6 and 27.gxf4 both lead to a semi-forced and quite simple mate. Out of respect for the chess standard of the readers, I will omit the variations in question.
**27...♗xf2+ 28.♔h1**
If 28.♔g2, then 28...♖b6 is also good, while 28.♔xf2 loses to 28...♖xf4+ 29.gxf4 ♕d2+ 30.♔g1 ♖xc1.
**28...♖b6**



**29.♕c2**
After 29.♕d5 Black can simply capture on f1, and after the queen exchange take on b2, with an easy win.
**29...e3** Here I was no longer looking for the most exact moves, since with 10 minutes on the clock I did not want to end up in time-trouble.
**30.♗g2 ♕e8 31.♕c5 ♖ff6**

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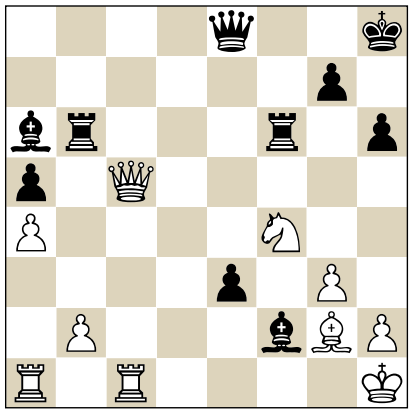
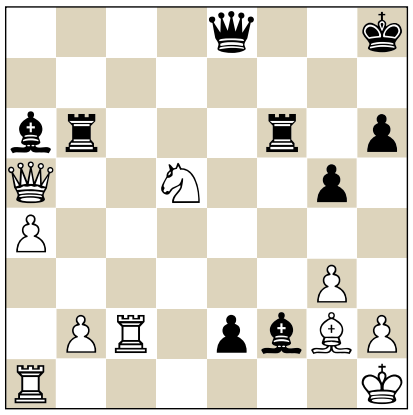


White's position is absolutely hopeless, and for this reason even this simple move is good enough to win.

**32.♖c2** A mistake, but it is hard to suggest anything sensible.

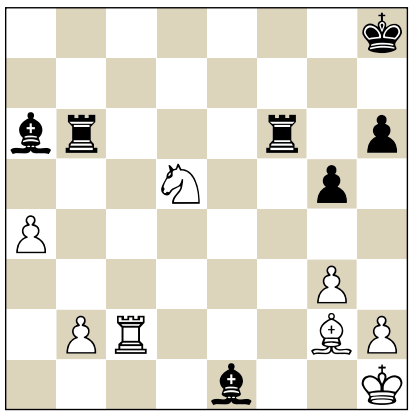
**32...g5 33.♘d5** If 33.♘e2 ♗d3, winning material. **33...e2 34.♕xa5**



**34...e1♕+** 34...♖bd6 is more forceful, but in such cases I usually choose the most reliable way.

**35.♖xe1 ♕xe1+ 36.♕xe1 ♗xe1**

The rest does not require any commentary.



**37.♘xb6 ♖xb6 38.♖c6 ♖xc6 39.♗xc6 ♔g7 40.♔g2 ♔f6 41.♗f3 ♔e5 42.h4 ♗c8 43.hxg5 hxg5 44.♔f1 ♗xg3 45.b4 ♔d4 46.a5 ♔c4 47.a6 ♗b8 48.♗b7**

And White resigned.

NOTES BY

**Sergei Movsesian**

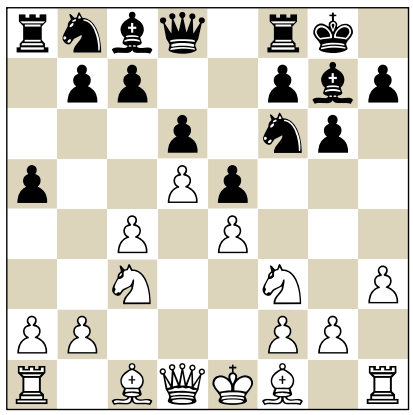
KI 20.5 – E92
**Sergei Movsesian**
**Alexander Grischuk**
Istanbul 2012 (6)

The match against Russia was after the free day at the Olympiad, so both sides had had some extra time to prepare. But sometimes it's tricky to organize your free day correctly...

**1.c4 g6 2.e4 ♗g7 3.d4 d6 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.h3**

I expected the KID from Grischuk, as he has started to use it more often lately. It was a logical choice from him, as my experience in this opening is mostly from the black side. On the other hand, Sasha couldn't know which line I would play – I have had no games in the classical KID for the last five years...

**6...e5 7.d5 a5**



One of the possible set-ups against the 6.h3 system.

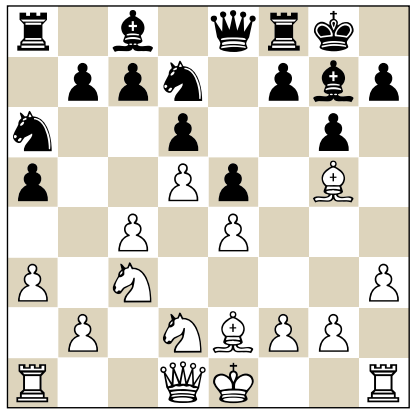
Another popular option here is 7...♘h5.

**8.♗g5 ♘a6 9.♗e2 ♕e8 10.♘d2 ♘d7 11.a3**

White wants to be ready to meet ...♘dc5 with b2-b4.

**Armenia**

| | | | pts | gms | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Levon Aronian | 2816 | 7 | 10 | 2849 |
| 2 | Sergei Movsesian | 2698 | 5 | 10 | 2652 |
| 3 | Vladimir Akopian | 2687 | 7½ | 10 | 2803 |
| 4 | Gabriel Sargissian | 2693 | 7 | 11 | 2676 |
| 5 | Tigran Petrosian | 2661 | 2½ | 3 | 2678 |



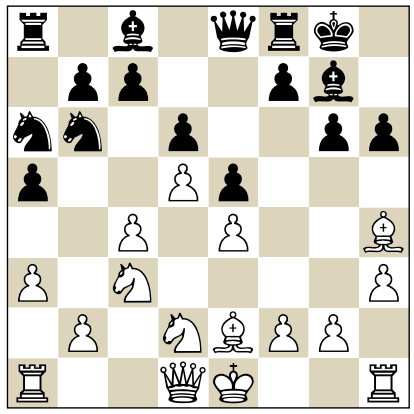
**11...h6?!**

During the post-mortem Grischuk described this move as 'horrific'. And indeed, it is difficult to find any advantages compared to the more logical ...f7-f6. Apart from that move, 11...♘b6 is also possible.

**12.♗h4**

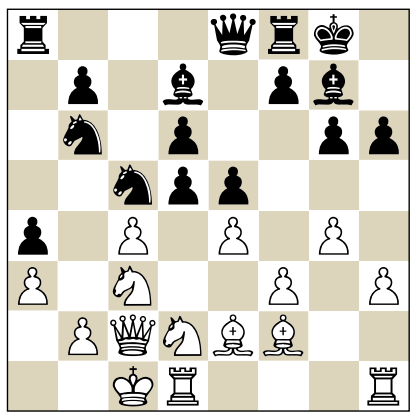
I didn't want to allow Black to push ...f7-f5 too easily after 12.♗e3: 12...f5 13.f3 ♘f6 14.b4 ♘h5, with an unclear position.

**12...♘b6**



**13.g4** Again fighting against ...f7-f5. After 13.b3 f5 14.f3 Black can try to exchange the dark-squared bishops with 14...♗f6!? 15.♗f2 ♕e7.

**13...a4 14.f3 ♘c5 15.♕c2 c6 16.♗f2 ♗d7 17.0-0-0 cxd5**

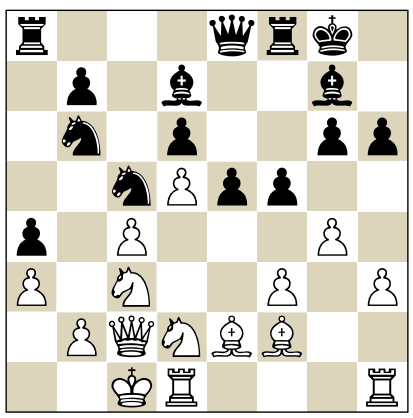


NEW IN CHESS

**Sergei Movsesian and Alexander Grischuk discuss key moments of their exciting clash. In the 'wings' their team captains Arzhak Petrosian (l.) and Yuri Dokhoian (r.) draw their own conclusions.**

**18.exd5** In case of 18.cxd5 Black can re-group after 18...♖c8 19.♔b1 ♘a8.

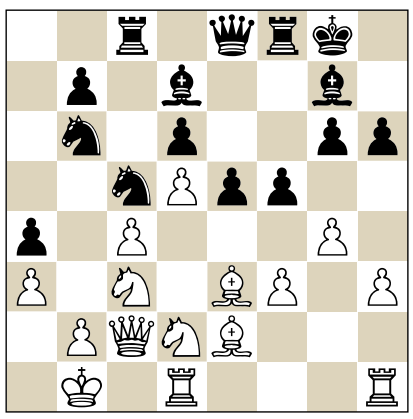
**18...f5**



**19.♔b1**

I don't like Houdini's suggestion of 19.♗xc5!? dxc5, as I have the feeling that Black will have enough counterplay thanks to the bishop on g7.

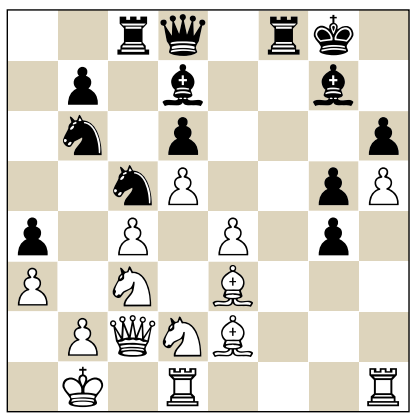
**19...♖c8 20.♗e3**



**20...♕d8**

Probably 20...♕e7!? was more accurate, in order to prepare against White's h3-h4. Probably best then is 21.♔a2!? (as 21.h4?! is met by 21...e4).

**21.h4 e4 22.fxe4 fxg4 23.h5 g5**

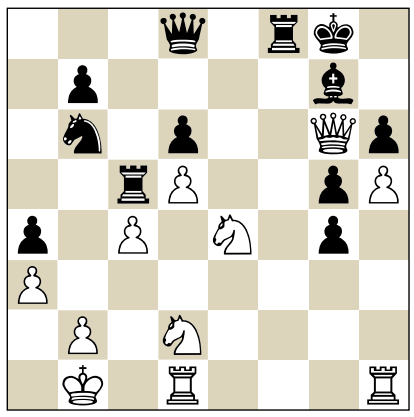


**24.♗xc5!**

The correct decision.

Something materialistic like 24.♖hg1? ♕e7 25.♗xg4 ♗xg4 26.♖xg4 ♘bd7 would just be positional hara-kiri.

**24...♖xc5 25.e5 ♗f5 26.♗d3 ♗xd3 27.♕xd3 ♗xe5 28.♕g6+ ♗g7 29.♘ce4**



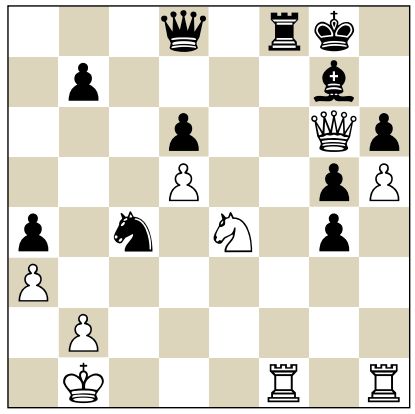
**29...♖xc4?**

Tempting, but wrong.

Grischuk was disappointed that after 29...♖c7 30.♘xd6 there is no 30...♖f6 because of 31.♕e8+, but 30...♕f6! leads to a playable endgame for Black. Instead of 30.♘xd6 I was also considering 30.c5, but it seems that here, too, Black is doing fine after 30...♘d7 (obviously not 30...♘xd5??, because of 31.♕e6+) 31.cxd6 ♖c8.

**30.♘xc4 ♘xc4 31.♖df1**

31.♖hf1 would most likely lead to similar lines as in the game.



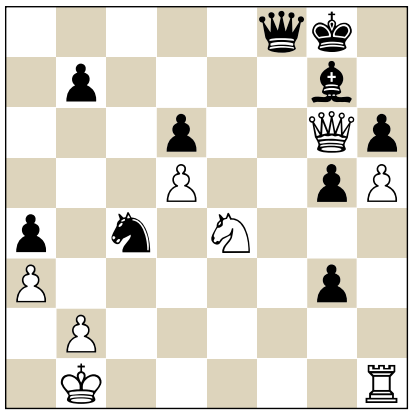
**31...g3?!**

Black played this with only seconds left on the clock...

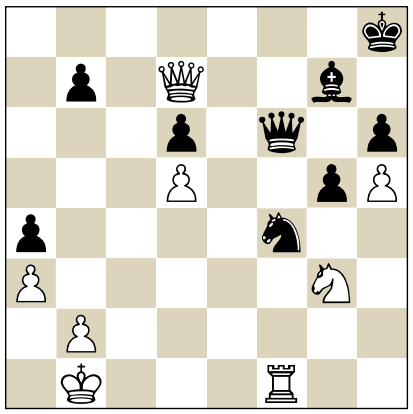
However, White would keep an advantage even after Black's best try 31...♘xa3+!?: 32.♔a2 ♘c4 33.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 34.♖e1 ♘e5 35.♕e6+ ♔h7 36.♘xd6 ♕f3 37.♕f5+ ♔g8 38.♕c8+

♔h7 39.♕c2+, although it would clearly not be as big as in the game. Alternatively, 31...♔h8 doesn't work due to 32.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 33.♖e1 ♗e5 34.♘g3!, and White is winning.

**32.♖xf8+ ♕xf8**



**33.♖e1! ♘e5 34.♕e6+ ♔h8 35.♘xg3 ♘d3 36.♖f1 ♘f4 37.♕d7 ♕f6**



**38.♕c8+?!**

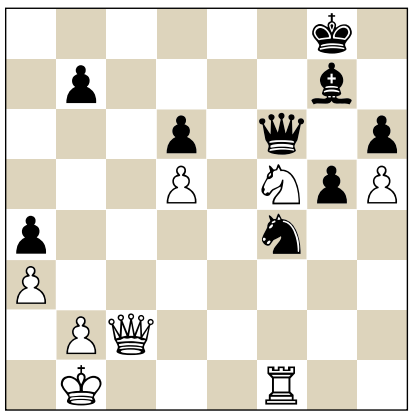
Too solid.

White would win more easily after 38.♕xb7 ♔h7 39.♕b4, followed by ♖f2-c2.

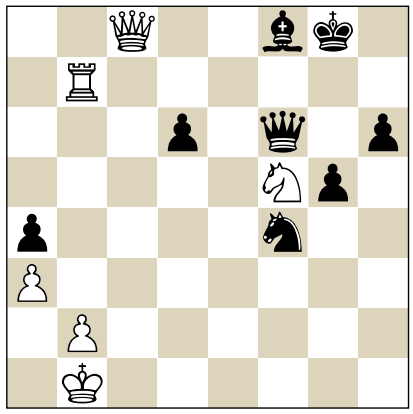
**38...♔h7 39.♕c2+ ♔g8 40.♘f5**

I decided to convert my advantage with a direct attack on Black's king position.

40.♘e2 was also good enough.

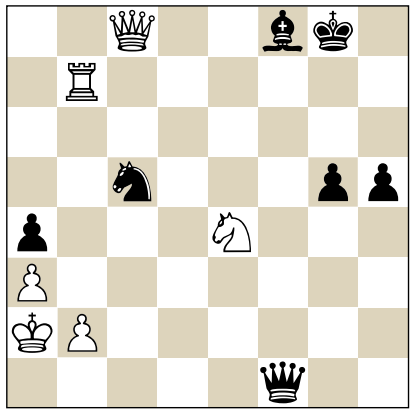


**40...♘xh5 41.♖e1 ♘f4 42.♖e7 ♗f8 43.♖xb7 ♘xd5 44.♕c8 ♘f4**



**45.♔a1! ♘e6 46.♘xd6 g4**

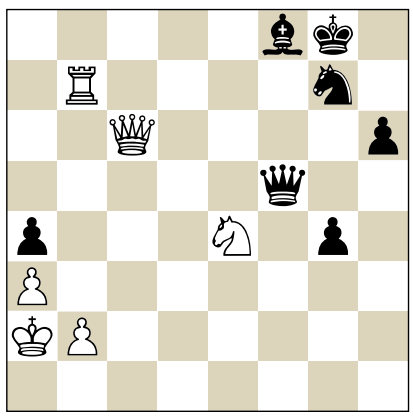
Black could try 46...h5 47.♘e4 ♕f1+ 48.♔a2 ♘c5,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

but White wins after 49.♘xc5 ♕c4+ 50.♔b1 ♕f1+ 51.♔c2 ♕c4+ 52.♔d2 ♕f4+ 53.♔c3 ♕e5+ 54.♔c4 ♕e2+ 55.♔d5 ♕d2+ 56.♔c6 ♕g2+ 57.♔b6 ♕xb2+ 58.♔a6.

**47.♘e4 ♕f1+ 48.♔a2 ♘g7 49.♕c6 ♕f5**



**50.♘f6+ ♔h8 51.♖f7**

Black resigned.

NOTES BY
**Vladimir Kramnik**

SL 11.16 – D10
**Vladimir Kramnik**
**Levon Aronian**
Istanbul 2012 (6)

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 cxd5**

This was already the third time that I played this position against Levon.

**5.♗f4 ♘c6 6.e3**

And this has become some sort of a tabiya in these games. I prepared the Exchange Slav for my world championship match against Anand in 2008, where I played it in the first game, and ever since I have been playing it from time to time. With rather limited success, but it is hard to expect something huge from the Exchange Slav. On the other hand, it's not part of mainstream theory these days and Black has to be accurate.



**6...a6**

In this game it also worked as a surprise weapon, as Levon started to think quite early, and I am pretty sure that this move was over-the-board improvisation.

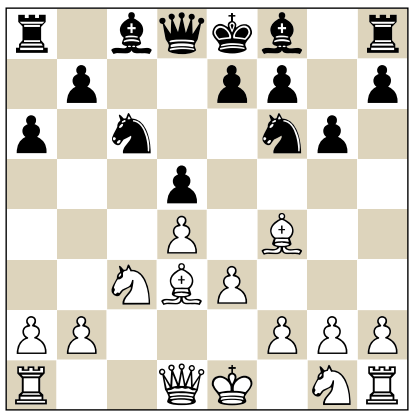
In the previous two games he went 6...♗f5, to which I replied 7.♕b3 in a tiebreak blitz game in Shanghai in 2010 and was successful, and less than half a year later I played 7.♖c1, a tricky move, in Wijk aan Zee in 2011, and here, too, I managed to get some advantage out of the opening.

**7.♗d3 g6**

This move, played after some 10 min-

utes' thinking, was to my mind further proof that this was improvisation. The main idea of this move is to get away from theoretical lines, but I don't see any reason for this, because the dangers are negligible and there is little risk of running into some powerful novelty.

It's obvious that the theoretical move 7...♗g4 is better. White would go 8.♘ge2 and can still ask some questions. With the text he achieved his goal, as I was out of the book, but on the other hand I was quite happy with my position. It's not usual to develop the dark-squared bishop to g7 in this variation, it would be better off on the f8-a3 diagonal. With the black bishop on g7 White gets a small but lasting advantage absolutely for free.



**8.h3**

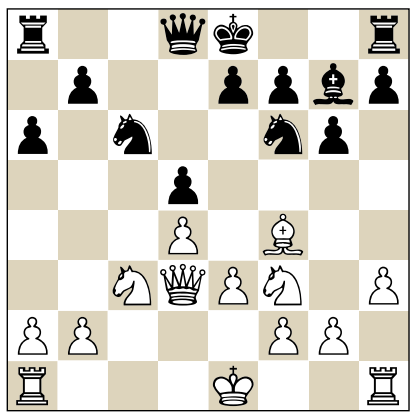
I was thinking I could win a tempo with 8.♘f3, when the concept that Levon used in the game would not work, but I was a bit worried about 8...♘h5 (of course Black can also play 8...♗g4), when after 9.♗g5 Black can chase my dark-squared bishop with 9...h6 10.♗h4 g5, and now 11.♘d2 allows the trick 11...♘f4, and after 12.exf4 gxh4 the situation is not clear and seems to be OK for Black.

**8...♗f5 9.♘f3**

This I played quite quickly.

After 9.♗xf5, which is the first thing you want to do in this position, the concept of Levon would become clear: 9...gxf5 10.♘f3 e6 11.♖c1 ♗d6, and Black would get counterplay on the g-file.

**9...♗xd3 10.♕xd3 ♗g7**



Black has achieved something, as the exchange of the light-squared bishops in this kind of position usually reduces White's chances of getting an advantage, but still I feel that White keeps an edge thanks to Black's remaining bishop being developed to a less than ideal square.

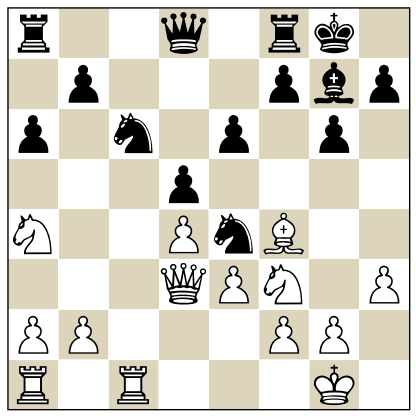
**11.0-0 0-0 12.♖fc1 e6 13.♘a4**

The most natural move, and I didn't need long to make it.

Perhaps 13.a3 would have been a bit more subtle, not to allow the immediate exchange of the knights.

**13...♘e4**

As Black doesn't have his bishop on the f8-a3 diagonal he has to play this against ♘c5.



**14.♘c5**

For the first time in the game I started to think and took some 15-20 minutes to decide on this move. This leads to some simplification, but I was afraid that otherwise Black would start his counterplay on the kingside.

For example, after 14.a3, hoping to start play on the queenside with b4, Black can quickly react with 14...g5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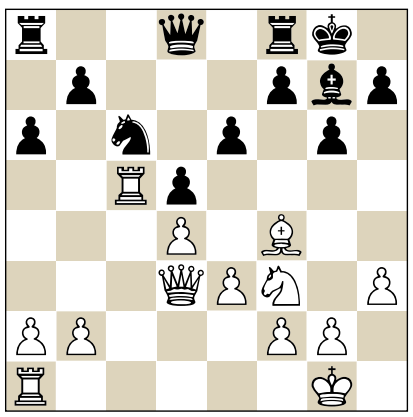
15.♗h2 f5, at some point followed by ...g4, and his counterplay should not be underestimated, especially since most of my pieces are on the queenside.

**14...♘xc5**

He has no choice, as he cannot play 14...f5.

**15.♖xc5**

To the inexperienced Exchange Slav player this may look drawish, but in fact White has his trumps. The computer assesses the position with a lot of zeroes and indeed defends very well, but for a human being the situation is less pleasant. Black is solid, but passive, without any active play.



**15...♕d7**

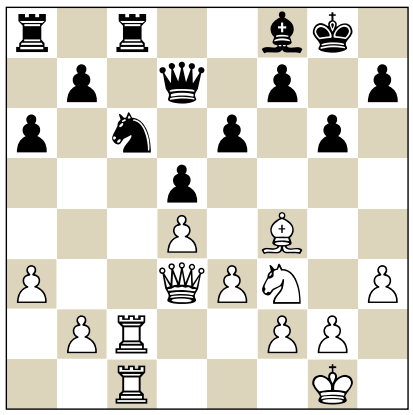
An interesting set-up that I didn't consider during the game was 15...f6!? 16.♖ac1 ♖f7, in order to put the bishop on f8, and at some point he can even look for counterplay with ...g5 and ...h5, although this kind of play is not to everyone's taste.

**16.♖ac1 ♖fc8**

I got the feeling that around here Levon got a bit too relaxed and started to play too quickly. Instead he should have taken some time to think, as the next two, three moves will be crucial to see if White will develop some real pressure with a3 and b4 or if Black can exchange rooks on the c-file and equalize completely. To me it seemed that Levon believed that the job was already done.

**17.a3 ♗f8 18.♖5c2**

I wanted to leave the b3-square for my queen. 18.♖5c3 looks more natural, but then Black can play 18...f6 (or even 18...♗d6!?, which in the game fails due to tactical reasons) 19.♘d2 ♘a7!, and Black frees himself.

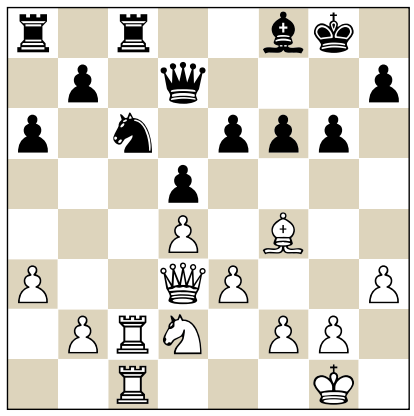


**18...f6**

Here 18...♗d6 is not so good, because after 19.♗xd6 ♕xd6 I have an important resource: 20.♕b3!, when after 20...♕d7 21.♕b6 it will be quite difficult for him to unpin, and by pushing my pawns on the queenside the pressure on the c-file may become quite annoying.

**19.♘d2**

A natural move; the knight is heading for c5. I thought, let's play it and see what happens. I am also learning from the young guys and adopting to modern chess. Perhaps there was a useful waiting move, like 19.h4, as suggested by the computer, but especially with the FIDE time-control it looks too subtle.



**19...♗d6?**

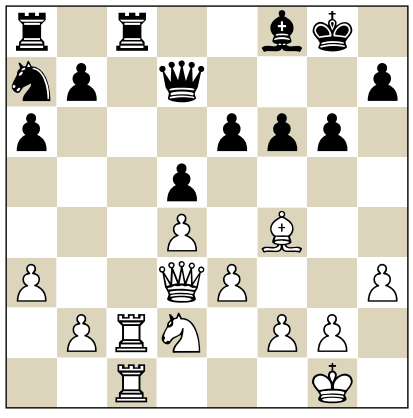
A strange decision after serious reflection. It would even have been better

Vladimir Kramnik: 'We were the only team who played against all major rivals. Even Armenia didn't meet Azerbaijan or the USA. We played all of them.'

NEW IN CHESS

to pass for Black than play this move. It's a serious positional mistake. My knight is going to c5 and the pawn on f6 has created a vulnerable spot in Black's position. He should have kept the bishop on f8 in order to exchange it for the knight on c5.

The computer points out a very precise way to play for Black and equalize: 19...♘a7!.



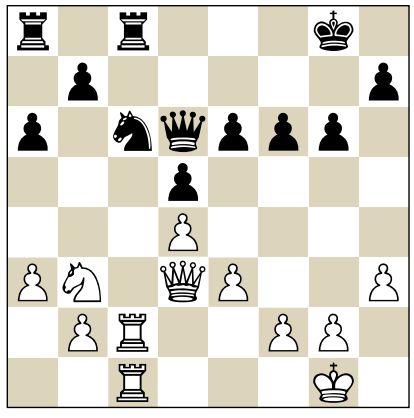
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

I had seen the move but believed it to be dangerous, and the same probably applied to my opponent, but the computer finds its way without problems, combining strategic ideas with tactical resources: 20.♖c7 (or 20.♗c7 ♘b5 21.♗a5 ♘d6) 20...♕d8 21.a4 – preventing ...♘b5 – 21...♖xc7 22.♗xc7 (one of the tactical tricks is revealed after 22.♖xc7, when Black has 22...e5 23.♖xb7 exf4 24.♕xa6 ♕c8) 22...♕e8 23.♕b3 b5, followed by ...♖c8, and I don't see any realistic chances for White to play for a win.

**20.♗xd6 ♕xd6 21.♘b3**

Now Black is in trouble. His main problem is the pawn on f6. If it was still on f7, White would enjoy a pleasant plus, but no more.

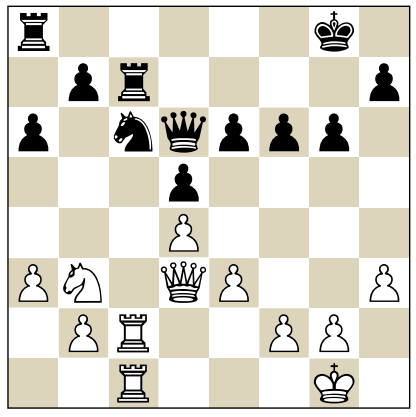
Now Black's king is vulnerable and in many lines the pawn on e6 will be hanging.



**21...♖c7**

The decisive mistake.

Levon was probably already unhappy with his position. The only move here was 21...b6, to cover the c5-square, when I intended to play 22.♘d2 ♕d7 23.♕b3 – an important move that makes it difficult for Black to unpin, e.g.: 23...b5 24.♕c3 ♘e7 25.♕a5 ♖xc2 26.♖xc2, followed by ♘b3 and ♘c5, and Black is very far from equality here. Still, that was the only way to resist.

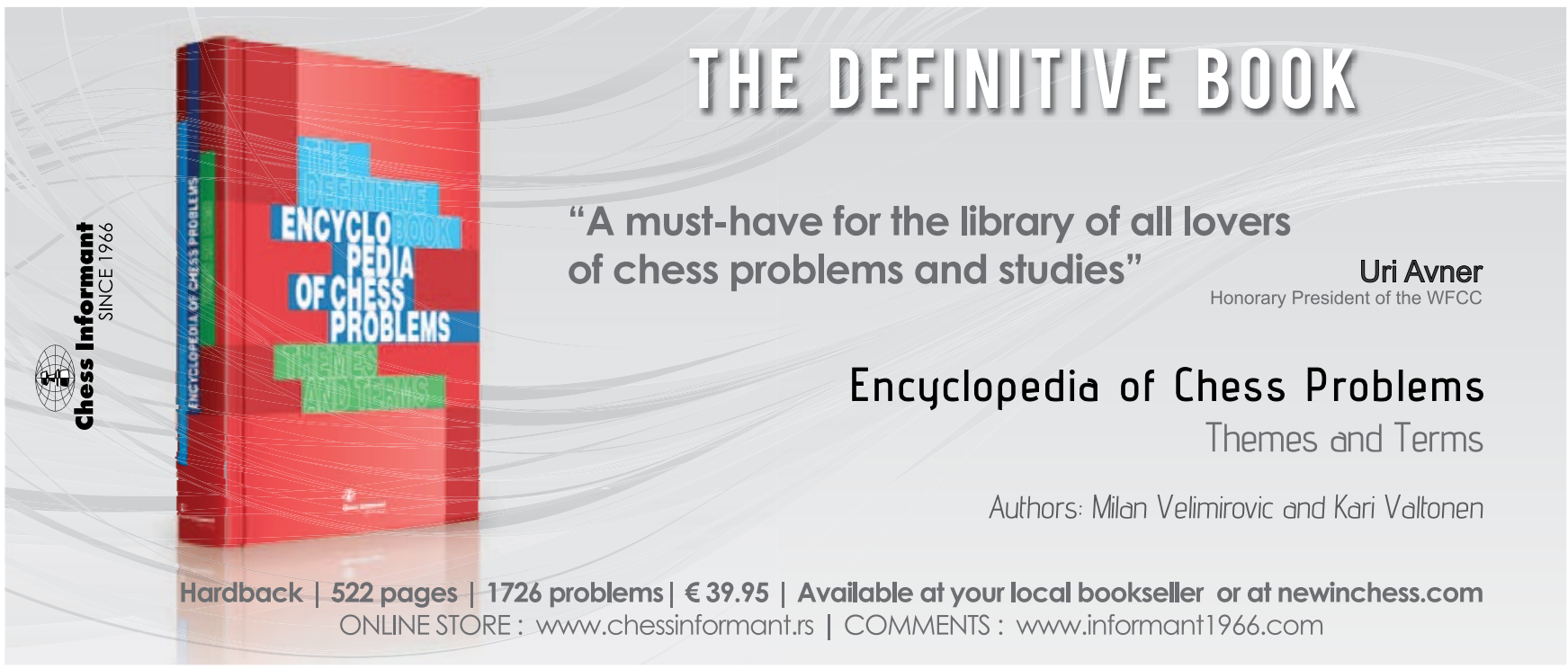


**22.♘a5!**

Even after the positional 22.♘c5 White would keep a serious advantage, but having taken a closer look at the position I found the text-move, which is even stronger, introducing a tactical motif into the position.

To be honest I was surprised that the position was already ripe for a final blow, but sometimes it happens that everything works well for you. I have to admit that I had not done anything special in this game so far, nor does it seem that Black did something terribly wrong, but all of a sudden White is winning. The only thing that was left for me to do was to calculate the lines precisely, which, uncharacteristically for me, I managed pretty well this time.

**22...♖ac8**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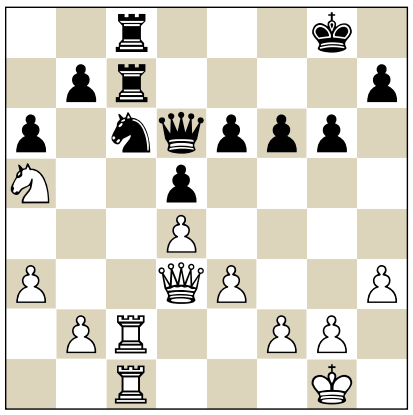
The only move, as I was threatening to take on b7.

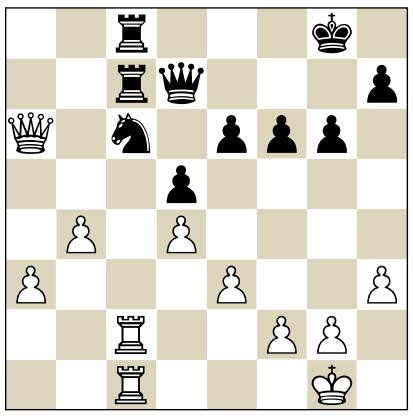


**23.♘xb7**

Not too difficult and I don't know what Levon had missed. Perhaps he had not seen the idea at all and it wasn't his day.

**23...♖xb7 24.♕xa6 ♖bc7 25.b4 ♕d7**

The only move to defend against White's threat b5.

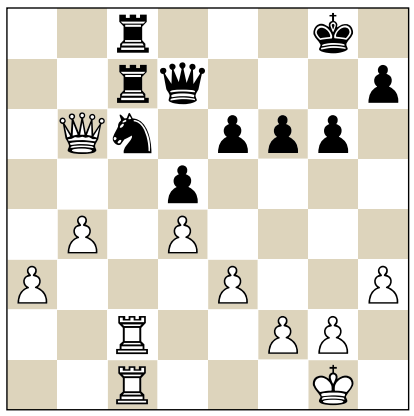


**26.♕b6!**

Perhaps he had also missed this important move, after which Black's position is hopeless.

However, even after 26.b5 his position is very dangerous, because he has to play 26...♘e7 27.♖xc7 ♖xc7 28.♖xc7 ♕xc7 29.♕xe6+ ♔f8 (he has to give up another pawn, as he would be paralysed after 29...♔g7 30.a4 ♘f5 31.b6) 30.♕xf6+ ♔e8, but actually Black may be able to hold this position. For instance, after 31.a4 there is 31...♕a5, and maybe Black can defend.

But the text-move, which of course I had seen in advance, clarifies the whole picture: Black is totally lost.



**26...♕e8**

Everything is losing now, so Levon decides to go for the last 'trick', and I decided to walk into the 'trap', which is actually the easiest way to win.

The main point of the combination is that after 26...♖b7 White plays 27.♖xc6 (it now becomes clear how much damage the pawn on f6 is doing, all this would not be possible if it was on f7) 27...♖xb6 28.♖xc8+ ♔f7 29.♖8c7, and I win back the queen.

The pawn on f6 also plays a crucial role in the line 26...♖b8 27.♕xb8+ ♘xb8 28.♖xc7 ♕b5 29.♖1c5 ♕b6, and now the computer indicates that 30.♖e7 wins on the spot (my intention was 30.b5 to restrict him completely and then 31.♖e7) 30...♔f8 31.♖cc7, and White wins.

Also losing is 26...♔f7 27.b5 ♖b7 and now 28.♕xc6 is the simplest.

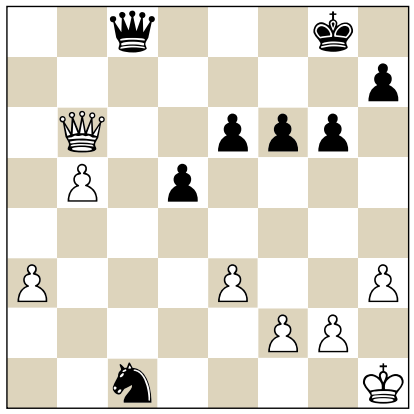
**27.b5**

Of course the prophylactic 27.♖c5 would also do.

**27...♘xd4 28.♖xc7 ♘e2+**

That was the idea.

**29.♔h1 ♘xc1 30.♖xc8 ♕xc8**



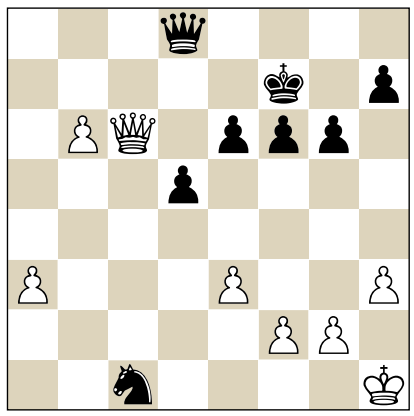
**31.♕c6!** This strong move decides.

**31...♕d8**

After 31...♕b8 I don't have to take the knight and go into a queen ending, but I have 32.b6 and my pawn queens. Here the game is basically over, but Levon decided not to resign immediately, in order not to discourage the team.

**32.b6 ♔f7**

After 32...♘d3 33.♕c7 there is no way to stop my b-pawn from promoting.



**33.♕c7+** According to one of the spectators, who was watching the game in the hall very closely, 33.b7 was also winning. I had seen it, but I thought that 33.♕c7+ was much more human and simpler. I have to add that the spectator was Garry Kasparov, who asked me immediately after the game why I didn't play 33.b7.

**33...♔e8 34.♕a7 d4 35.b7**

And finally, with a heavy heart, Levon resigned.

It was a smooth game, but nothing special. It was important from a sporting point of view. When Levon resigned, the situation in the match was incredibly good for us and I was very happy that this point would enable us to win a crucial match, but unfortunately it only enabled us to draw the match and stay in the race for first place. And of course it doesn't happen every day that you manage to beat a player like Aronian.

**Russia**

| | | | pts | gms | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Vladimir Kramnik | 2797 | 5 | 9 | **2781** |
| 2 | Alexander Grischuk | 2763 | 7 | 11 | **2746** |
| 3 | Sergey Karjakin | 2785 | 7 | 10 | **2784** |
| 4 | Evgeny Tomashevsky | 2730 | 2½ | 5 | **2559** |
| 5 | Dmitry Jakovenko | 2722 | 7 | 9 | **2783** |

NOTES BY
**Vasily Ivanchuk**

NI 6.3 – E52
**Vasily Ivanchuk**
**Wang Hao**
Istanbul 2012 (11)

At the start of the final round, the situation in the top group was very complicated. China was leading, followed by Armenia and Russia, who all had the same number of match points. The only way for Ukraine to catch up with the leaders was to defeat China in our last match.

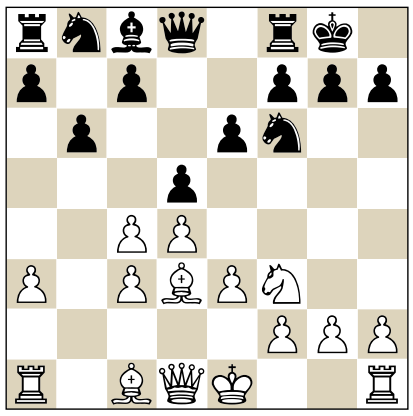
**1.d4**

A difficult choice. After 1.e4, Wang Hao plays a lot of different openings.

**1...♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 b6**

This is not the main line in this variation, but the idea of fianchettoing the queen's bishop to keep control of the centre is interesting.

**7.a3 ♗xc3+ 8.bxc3**



**8...c6**

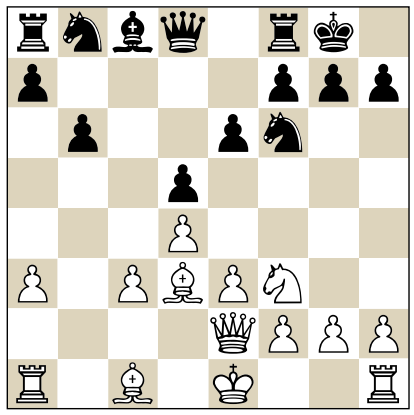
Black has erected a 'Chinese Wall', which is not easy to break.

Known was 8...♗a6 9.cxd5 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 ♕xd5 11.0-0 c5 12.♖e1 ♕e4 13.♕e2 ♖c8 14.♗b2 ♘bd7 15.♖ac1 h6 16.♘d2 ♕b7 17.e4 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♖xc1 19.♖xc1 ♖c8 20.♖xc8+ ♕xc8, with equality, although in the end White won in Speelman-Ehlvest, Linares 1991.

**9.cxd5 cxd5**

It was interesting to take with the other pawn: 9...exd5 10.0-0 ♗a6 11.a4 ♖e8 12.♗xa6 ♘xa6 13.♕d3 ♘c7 14.♗a3, followed by pushing the c-pawn, with a white edge.

**10.♕e2**



**10...♘c6**

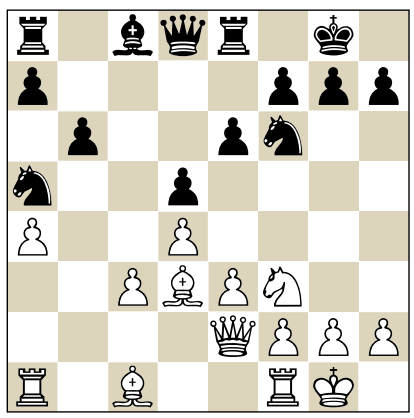
If Black tries to exchange bishops with 10...♗b7 11.♗b2 ♕c8 12.♖c1 ♗a6, White will play in the centre: 13.c4! dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♗xc4 15.♖xc4 ♕b7 16.0-0 ♘bd7 17.♕c2 ♖fc8 18.♖c1, with a slight advantage.

**11.0-0 ♘a5**

Preferable was 11...♗b7 12.a4 ♕c7 13.♗a3 ♖fc8 14.♖ac1 ♘a5 15.♘e5, when White is slightly better.

**12.a4 ♖e8?!**

During the game 12...♕c7 13.♗a3 ♖d8 14.♘e5 ♗b7 15.f3 seemed more logical to me.



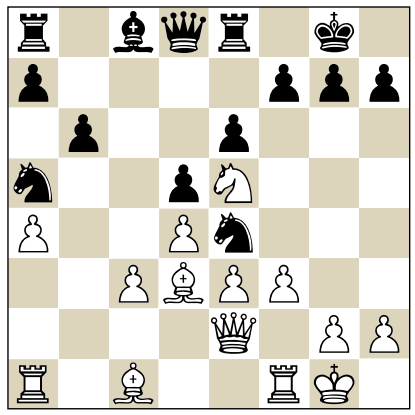
**13.♘e5**

White's position is definitely more comfortable. Despite the weakness on c3, he has better piece play and the possibility to push f3/e4 to gain central control. And the bishop pair may become dangerous in the future.

**13...♘e4**

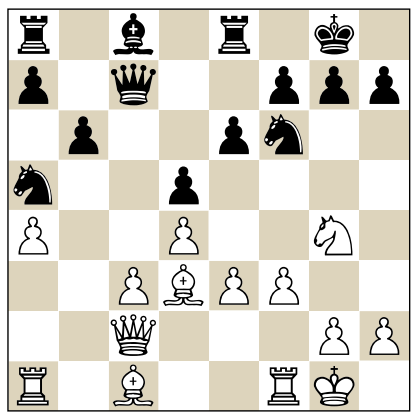
A calmer continuation was 13...♗b7 14.♗a3 ♕c7 15.♖ac1, when White has two plans: f2-f4 or c3-c4.

**14.f3**



**14...♘d6**

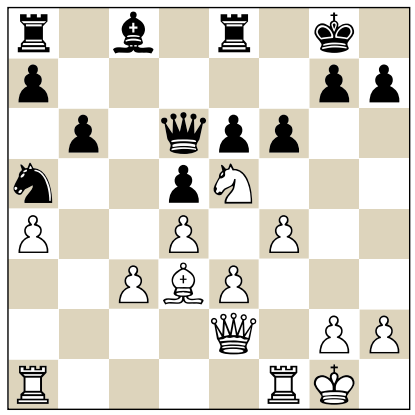
After the other knight retreat 14...♘f6 15.♕c2 (winning the exchange does not really lead to an advantage: 15.♗a3 ♘d7 16.f4 f5 17.♗b5 ♘xe5 18.♗xe8 ♕xe8 19.fxe5 ♗d7, with excellent counterplay for Black) 15...♕c7 16.♘g4! White wins a pawn:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

16...♘xg4 (16...h6 17.♘xf6+ gxf6 18.e4 is not such a good idea) 17.♗xh7+ ♔h8 18.fxg4 e5 19.♗f5.

**15.♗a3 ♗b7** The attempt to chase away the strong knight with 15...f6 runs into 16.♗xd6! ♕xd6 17.f4!



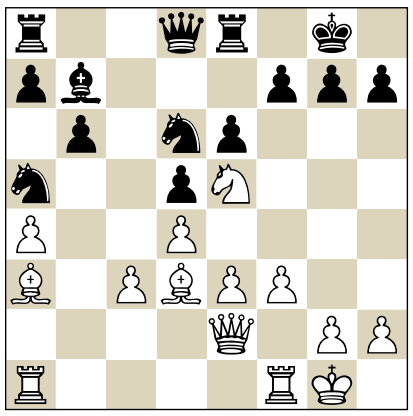
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

17...fxe5 (17...♖e7 is met by 18.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 19.♕h5+ ♔g8 20.♖f3,

Vasily 'lost in thought' Ivanchuk won a brilliant game that ruined China's chances for gold and brought Ukraine the bronze medals.

NEW IN CHESS

and wins; 17...♕e7 18.♕h5, with a big advantage) 18.♕h5 g6 19.♗xg6 ♖e7 20.fxe5 ♕d7 21.♗d3 ♖g7 22.♖f6 ♕e7 23.♖af1 ♗d7 24.♖1f4 ♘c4 25. ♖g4, and White wins.



**16.♗xd6!?**

A good alternative was 16.♕c2 g6 17. e4, grabbing hold of the centre with the support of the bishop pair.

However, I was attracted by another idea, associated with the advance of the f-pawn.

**16...♕xd6 17.f4**

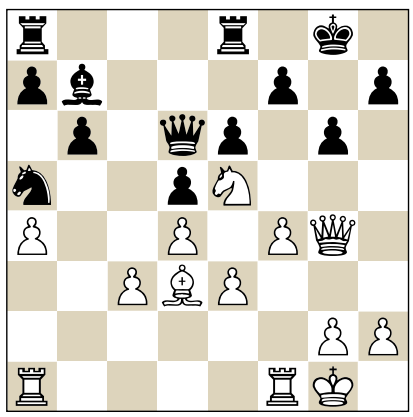
At this point my opponent was already in time-trouble.

**17...g6**

A more solid defence was 17...f5, when White can try 18.g4 or 18.♖f3, with good chances.

**18.♕g4**

Not so clear was 18.g4. For example: 18...f6 19.♘f3 ♖ac8 20.♖ac1 ♖c7 21. g5 f5 22.♘e5 ♖ec8, and it's hard to see how White can be better.



**18...♘c4?**

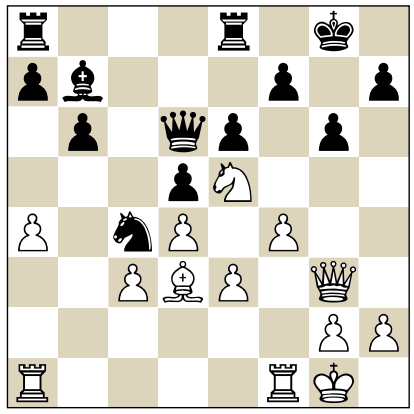
The first of a series of bad moves caused by Wang Hao's time-trouble.

Much better looked 18...♕e7, with the idea of 19.f5?! (instead White should step up the attack with 19.♖f3) 19...exf5 20.♗xf5 ♘c6!, and suddenly White has problems.

**19.♕g3!**

A quiet manoeuvre that the computers don't understand. Keeping his threats, White offers Black a choice that is not easy to make.

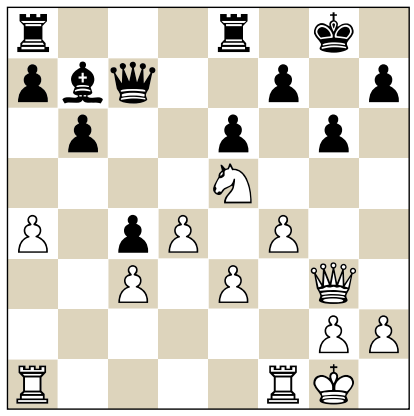
Another option was 19.♗xc4 dxc4 20.♕g5 ♖f8 21.♘g4, with powerful play on the black squares.



**19...♕c7?** The decisive error.

The best way to defend was 19...♕e7, when I was going to play 20.♖a2 (White retains a pleasant plus after 20.♘xc4 dxc4 21.♗c2), with a white initiative.

**20.♗xc4 dxc4**



**21.f5!** The decisive breakthrough. Now Black's position collapses.

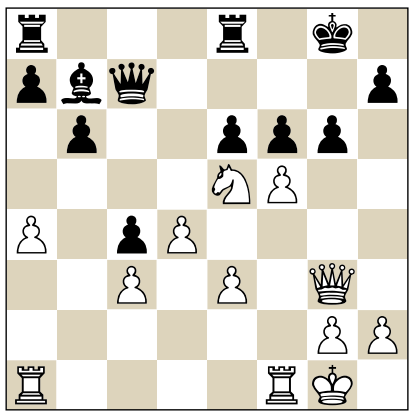
**21...f6**

This invites a brilliant combination. But the alternatives offer no hope of survival either:

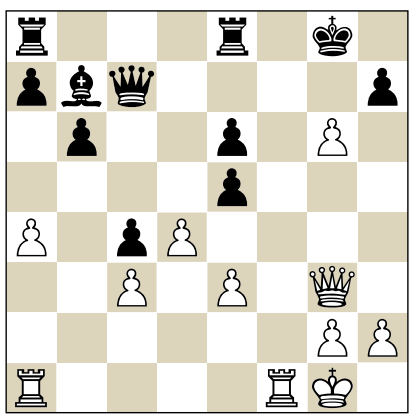
21...exf5 22.♖xf5 ♗d5 23.♖af1 ♖f8

| Ukraine | | | pts | gms | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Vasily Ivanchuk | 2769 | 6 | 10 | **2775** |
| 2 | Ruslan Ponomariov | 2734 | 7 | 10 | **2769** |
| 3 | Andrey Volokitin | 2709 | 6 | 9 | **2750** |
| 4 | Pavel Eljanov | 2693 | 5½ | 8 | **2696** |
| 5 | Alexander Moiseenko | 2706 | 5 | 7 | **2663** |

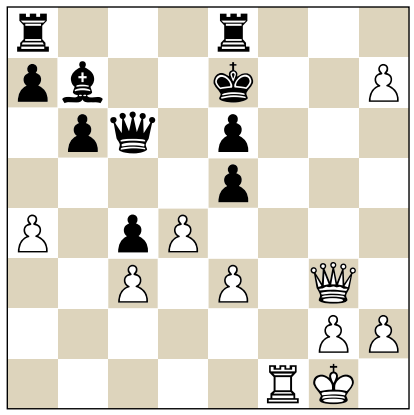
24.e4 (or 24.♕h4 gxf5 25.♕g3+ ♔h8 26.♘g6+ hxg6 27.♕xc7, and wins) 24...♗e6 25.♖f6, and Black's position is hopeless.
21...♖f8 22.f6, and Black is lost.



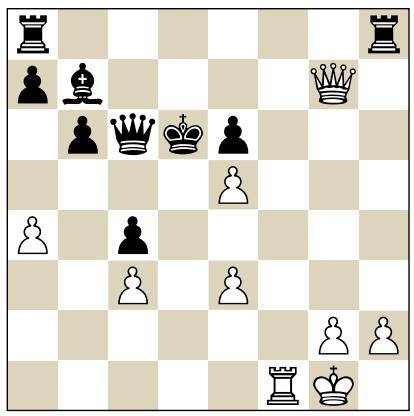
**22.fxg6! fxe5**
No better is 22...♕g7 23.♖xf6 ♕xf6 24.♖f1! ♕g7 25.gxh7+ ♔h8 26.♘f7+ ♔xh7 27.♕h4+ ♔g6 28.♘e5+, or 22...hxg6 23.♖xf6.



**23.♖f7!**
White rounds off the attack with a double piece sacrifice. The black king is defenceless.
**23...♕c6 24.gxh7+ ♔xf7 25.♖f1+ ♔e7**



**26.h8♕!!**
This quiet move is the point of White's combination. The promoted pawn distracts the rook to h8, where it is vulnerable and not fulfilling its defensive duties.
**26...♖xh8 27.♕g7+ ♔d6 28.dxe5+**

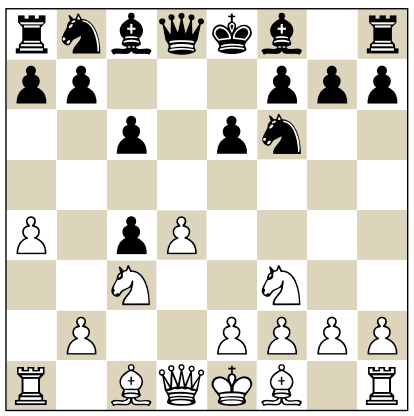


**28...♔d5**
Black resigned, as he will be mated. His fate would be the same after 28...♔c5 29.♕e7+ ♔d5 30.♖d1+ ♔e4 31.♖d4+ ♔xe3 32.♕g5+, and mate follows.
It was a tough match that we decided in our favour. Thanks to this victory we managed to win the bronze medals.

NOTES BY
## Ding Liren

SL 3.4 – D16
**Ding Liren**
**Oliver Barbosa**
Istanbul 2012 (9)

This was my first time to participate in the Olympiad. After a loss in the third round I restored confidence with two wins with black. Before this match our team had one draw and one loss. So we were all eager to win to fight for the medals.
**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3**
My favourite line against the Slav Defence, and I have had got some good results so far.
**4...dxc4 5.a4 e6**



**6.e4**
A deviation from my second-round game against Brunello, which went 6.e3 c5 7.♗xc4 ♘c6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♕e2 cxd4 10.exd4 0-0 11.♖d1 ♘b4 12.♘e5 ♗d7 13.a5 ♖c8 14.a6 bxa6 15.♗xa6 ♘xa6 16.♖xa6 ♖c7 17.♗f4 ♗c8 18.♖aa1 a6 19.♗g3 ♗b7 and Black holds. Before the game I told myself

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China's coach Li Wenliang had good reason to be happy with Ding Liren's Olympiad debut. The young national champion scored 7½/10, which amounted to a 2764 TPR.

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to try something new and take more risks. And it worked!

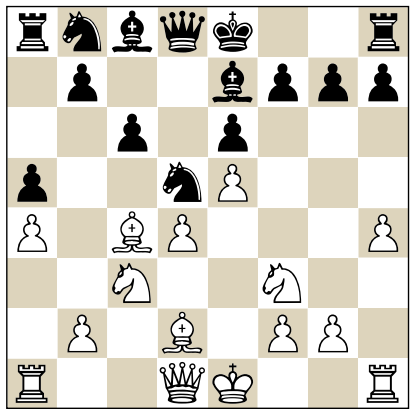
**6...♗b4 7.e5** 7.♗g5 is another possibility, but after 7...♕a5 8.♗d2 c5 9.♗xc4 cxd4 10.♘xd4 0-0, White can no longer play a3.

**7...♘d5 8.♗d2 a5**

A pleasant surprise! I had spent the whole morning studying the main line starting with 8...b5, which leads to complicated play. After some thought he came up with a new plan. But someone once said, the best way to play against a gambit is to accept it. Maybe after my win against Mamedov in the previous round my opponent was afraid of my preparation ☺.

**9.♗xc4 ♗e7 10.h4!?**

An important moment. Another plan was to simply castle, then attack with the pieces. For example 10.0-0 ♘a6 11.♘e4 ♘ab4 (11...h6 is met by 12.♘e1, threatening 13.♕g4) 12.♗g5 0-0 13.♖a3 b6 14.♗xe7 ♕xe7 15.♘e1, and White has a strong initiative. With the text-move I want to push the h-pawn further to create some weaknesses.



**10...h6?** A serious positional mistake. 10...0-0 is also bad because of 11.♗d3, threatening 12.♗xh7.

He should have developed quickly by playing 10...b6. After 11.h5 (11.♗g5 0-0 12.♘e4 ♘a6 13.♘d6 ♘ab4 and Black is OK) 11...♗a6 12.♗xa6 ♘xa6 13.h6 g6 14.0-0 (14.♘e4 c5) 14...0-0 15.♘e4 c5 16.♖c1 ♕d7 Black has counterplay on the queenside. The d5-knight is really strong; it protects the important f6-square.

**11.h5**

Fixing the pawn structure and planning ♖h3-g3. Black has no good way to protect the g7-pawn.

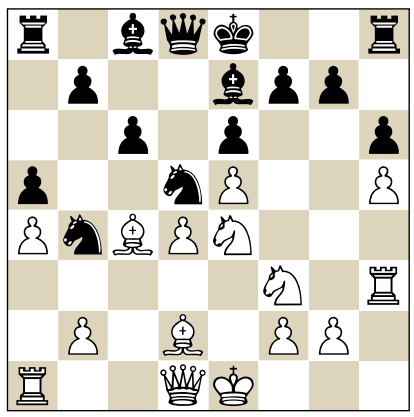
**11...♘a6**

Maybe it's better for Black to activate the c8-bishop by playing 11...b6 12.♖h3 ♗a6 13.♗xa6 ♘xa6 14.♖g3 ♗f8, although White is on top.

**12.♘e4**

12.♖h3 ♘b6 13.♗e2 c5 14.♘b5 is also good.

**12...♘ab4 13.♖h3**



**13...b6** The horrible looking 13...0-0 doesn't work well: 14.♖g3 ♔h8 15.♕c1! ♔h7 16.♔f1 b6 17.♔g1 (17.♘h2!?) 17...♖a7 18.♘h2, and Black is in great danger.

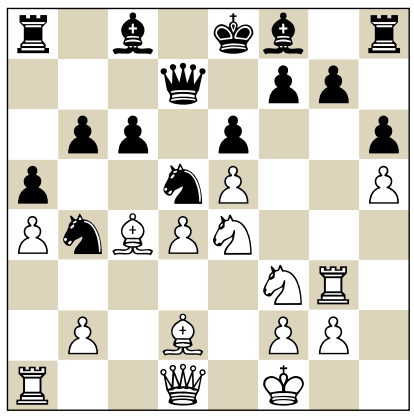
13...f5 is his best try, although after 14.exf6 gxf6 15.♖g3 ♕b6 16.♔f1 ♗d7 17.♕e2 0-0-0 18.♖g7 the rook breaks through.

**14.♖g3 ♗f8** The only move.

**15.♔f1 ♕d7**

This strange looking move hides the plan of ...♗b7, followed by ...0-0-0, but it's a bit slow.

15...♗a6 will be met by 16.b3.



**China**

| | | | pts | gms | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Wang Hao** | 2726 | 6 | 10 | **2761** |
| 2 | **Wang Yue** | 2685 | 5½ | 9 | **2707** |
| 3 | **Ding Liren** | 2695 | 7½ | 10 | **2764** |
| 4 | **Bu Xiangzhi** | 2670 | 4½ | 8 | **2655** |
| 5 | **Li Chao** | 2665 | 6 | 7 | **2794** |

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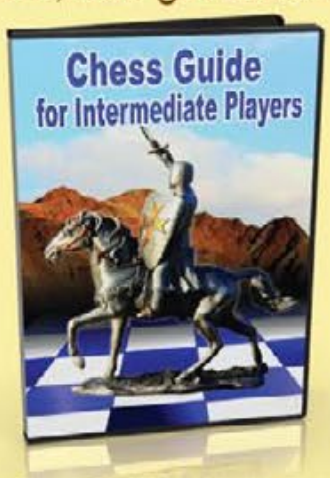


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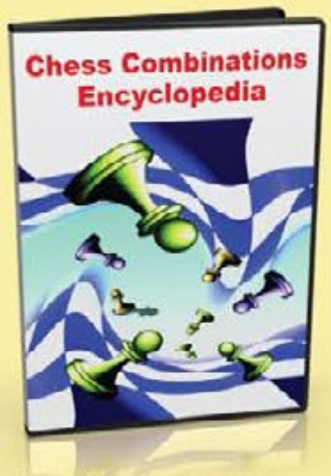


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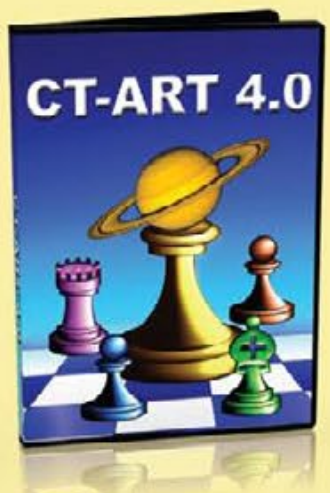


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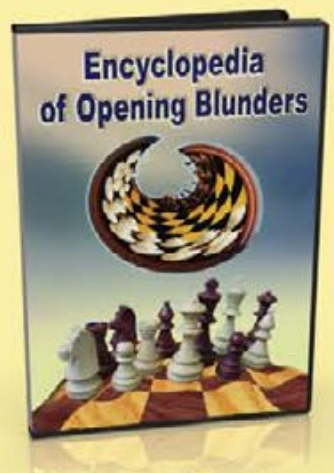


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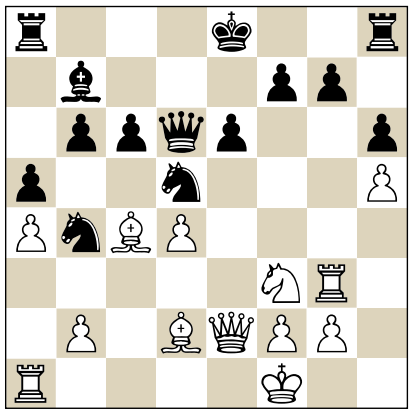
**16.♕e2!** There is no need to play 17.♔g1; the king is really safe on f1 because of the c4-bishop. Now I'm ready to launch the decisive attack!

**16...♗b7 17.♘d6+ ♗xd6**

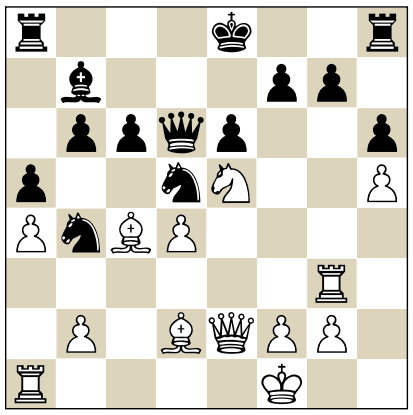
17...♔d8 looks ugly: after 18.♘e1 the d6-knight is like a bomb in Black's camp.

**18.exd6 ♕xd6**



**19.♘e5**

Preventing 19...0-0-0!. During the game I thought 19.♖xg7 was not strong because of 19...♕f8 20.♕e5 0-0-0. But after 21.♗xb4 axb4 (21...♘xb4 22.♗xe6+) 22.a5 bxa5 23.♖xa5 ♖d7 24.♗xd5 White is winning.



**19...♖g8**

Black had some other options:

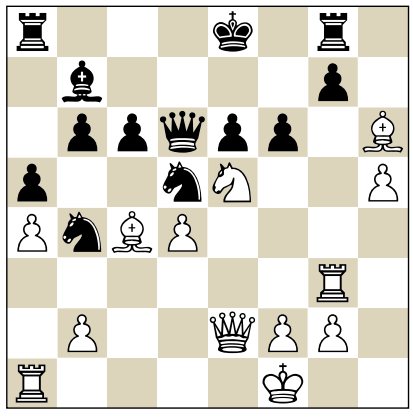
– 19...♘c2 20.♕e4 ♘xa1 21.♘xf7 ♔xf7 22.♕g6+ ♔e7 23.♕xg7+ ♔d8 24.♕xh8+ ♔d7 25.♖g7+ ♘e7 26.♕xh6 is the beautiful line I saw before playing 19.♘e5.

– 19...♕d8 20.♖f3 ♘f6, and now 21.d5! is decisive.

– 19...♖f8 is probably the most tenacious defence, but after 20.♗xb4 ♕xb4 21.♖xg7 0-0-0 22.♖xf7!? ♘f4! 23.♗xe6+! ♘xe6 24.♘xc6 ♗xc6 25.♕xe6+ ♔b8 26.♖xf8 ♖xf8 27.♕xc6 ♕xd4 28.♕c2 ♕h4 29.♔g1 ♕xh5 30.♖e1 White should win.

**20.♗xh6 f6**

20...♕f8 21.♗d2 (the beautiful 21.♘g6 doesn't work, in view of 21...♕d6) 21...0-0-0 22.♗xb4 axb4 23.a5 is also hopeless for Black.



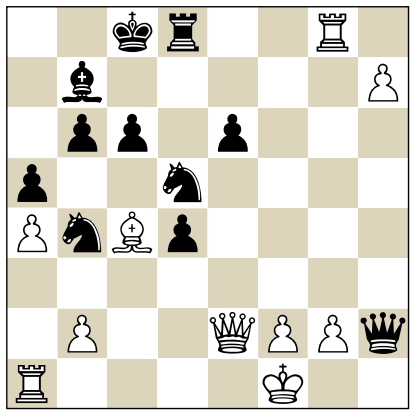
**21.♗xg7!**

Much stronger than 21.♘d3 ♕d7, when Black is still in the game. Now the great dark-squared bishop and the h-pawn are enough compensation for the piece, while Black's army (especially ♗b7 and ♘b4) is sleeping. The rest is easy.

**21...fxe5 22.h6 0-0-0 23.h7 ♖xg7**

23...exd4 24.♗e5 or 23...♖ge8 24.♕xe5.

**24.♖xg7 exd4 25.♖g8 ♕h2**



**26.h8♕** It's unusual to see a pawn promoting in the middlegame.

Black resigned.

In the end we won the match with the score 3½-½.

I want to say it's a great honour to fight for the team. We five men have the same goal. We were only one step away from the gold medal. As for me, I not only thought it a pity, but also an unforgettable experience. ■

**Istanbul (open) 2012**

| | | Pts | Tb1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Armenia | 19 | 397.0 |
| 2 | Russia | 19 | 388.5 |
| 3 | Ukraine | 18 | 363.0 |
| 4 | China | 17 | 390.5 |
| 5 | USA | 17 | 361.0 |
| 6 | Netherlands | 16 | 329.0 |
| 7 | Vietnam | 16 | 313.5 |
| 8 | Romania | 16 | 310.0 |
| 9 | Hungary | 15 | 368.0 |
| 10 | Azerbaijan | 15 | 344.0 |
| 11 | Cuba | 15 | 338.5 |
| 12 | Germany | 15 | 334.5 |
| 13 | Poland | 15 | 313.5 |
| 14 | Serbia | 15 | 307.0 |
| 15 | Italy | 15 | 306.0 |
| 16 | Sweden | 15 | 303.5 |
| 17 | England | 15 | 300.5 |
| 18 | Denmark | 15 | 270.5 |
| 19 | Moldova | 14 | 348.5 |
| 20 | Bulgaria | 14 | 321.5 |
| 21 | Philippines | 14 | 321.0 |
| 22 | Argentina | 14 | 316.0 |
| 23 | France | 14 | 305.0 |
| 24 | Uzbekistan | 14 | 303.0 |
| 25 | Slovenia | 14 | 297.0 |
| 26 | Israel | 14 | 296.0 |
| 27 | Croatia | 14 | 295.5 |
| 28 | Latvia | 14 | 295.0 |
| 29 | Belarus | 14 | 289.5 |
| 30 | Slovakia | 14 | 264.5 |
| 31 | Turkmenistan | 14 | 255.0 |
| 32 | Australia | 14 | 252.5 |
| 33 | Bangladesh | 14 | 227.5 |
| 34 | Czech Republic | 13 | 315.0 |
| 35 | India | 13 | 309.5 |
| 36 | Georgia | 13 | 306.0 |
| 37 | Spain | 13 | 286.5 |
| 38 | FYROM | 13 | 275.5 |
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| 45 | Norway | 13 | 247.5 |
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| 47 | Iceland | 13 | 241.0 |
| 48 | Turkey 2016 | 13 | 236.5 |
| 49 | Paraguay | 13 | 234.0 |
| 50 | Kazakhstan | 13 | 234.0 |
| 51 | Venezuela | 13 | 211.5 |
| 52 | Canada | 12 | 261.0 |
| 53 | Egypt | 12 | 255.5 |
| 54 | Bosnia & Herzegovina | 12 | 254.0 |

157 teams, 11 rounds

DAVID LLADA

He is the only man in the world who participated in more than half the Olympiads that have been held so far. At the 40th edition in Istanbul, Eugene Torre played on the team of the Philippines for the 21st time. A perfect occasion for a lengthy interview with Asia's first ever grandmaster about his rich career, his brief stint as a movie actor, the life lessons we can draw from chess and, of course, his good friend Bobby Fischer. 'I was hoping to be considerate with him. He should be treated with the care, the extra understanding you give a special child. And then let's enjoy his gift.'

**Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam**

# On top of Mount Olympus

Watching the teams of the Philippines as they arrive in Hall 9 of the Istanbul Expo Center, you'd easily be forgiven if you took them for a class of school children on an excursion. Having passed the security check at the entrance they form a circle and, between excited laughter and banter, the boys and girls, almost all uniformly dressed, listen to what the adults in their group have to say. Eugene Torre could well be the headmaster. His words unmistakably carry authority, even if they are spoken softly and in a mild-mannered way. Torre likes his role as the oldest and most experienced member of the team. He hopes that he will not only be able to inspire his much younger colleagues to make good moves on the board, but that his advice will also help them to make good moves in life.

When he plays his games, the Philippine legend demonstrates the same calm and control. Quietly he executes his moves. His face betrays nothing of what he thinks of the position. When his opponent resigns, there is not a smidgeon of bravado, and when he has to admit defeat himself he does so with grace. Perhaps the new controls with time increments have helped to make him calmer. He remembers his delight when as early as 1988 his good friend Bobby Fischer told him about the new clock he was working on. As an inveterate time-trouble addict Torre enthusiastically welcomed the idea of adding time. How would his Candidates' match against Ribli in 1983, one of the biggest disappointments in his career, have gone if he had managed his time better?

Torre is as equanimous as he is at the board when we talk for several hours on two consecutive nights in the Radisson Blu Hotel, where we are both staying. On the first night he doesn't refer at all to his win against Nigel Short the day before. On the second night his mood doesn't seem to be affected by the loss he suffered only hours ago in a long game against Bu Xiangzhi.

At 60, Torre holds a remarkable record: he has played in 21 Olympiads, more than anyone else. One more than Lajos Portisch from Hungary and two more than Heikki Westerinen from Finland. He says that you have to be a bit crazy to play so many Olympiads, but he still loves to play chess. In fact, his record could have been 22, but he refused to play in the qualifier for the 2008 Olympiad in Dresden. The tournament consisted of 18 rounds with double rounds on seven days. To make it even less attractive the federation offered no conditions whatsoever. Following his refusal Torre was left out of the team, which was quite a drastic measure, as he had just won the prestigious President's Cup. At the last moment the federation showed some remorse and asked him to accompany the team to Dresden as its captain.

The first Olympiad he played in was in 1970, in Siegen. Three times he won the bronze medal on Board 1, in 1974 in Nice (14 points from 19 games), in 1980 in Malta (11/14) and in 1986 in Dubai (9½/13). With a smile he remembers the early years, when it was not always easy to find sponsorship for the team and Florencio Campomanes, already the predominant force in Philippine chess, often kept the players in uncertainty about whether they would leave for the Olympiad at all. 'With Campo there were always these last-minute arrangements. At one time, I think it was my first one in 1970, we only got our plane tickets on the day we were to leave. But afterwards things got better. Campo was like my second father. He's considered the godfather of Philippine chess. He did so much for Philippine chess and we acknowledge that. He told me one time that for chess to become popular in a country, you need at least one star, a chess player, and you need a good organizer. Those were his words. Yes, he was referring to me, and then he was referring to himself.'

There was no doubt that Torre was that star. He became Asia's first grandmaster, advanced to the Candidates' matches of the world championship and won international tournaments such as the one in Manila in 1976, where he finished ahead of the new World Champion Anatoly Karpov.

Just like Karpov, Torre was born in 1951, one of the most fertile chess years ever. The vintage also included his good friends Jan Timman and Ulf Anders-

**President Ferdinand Marcos vs. Bobby Fischer. 'That game was not prearranged. You know me, Eugene, even with heads of state I don't prearrange.'**

son. Often they'd travel together, other fellow travellers being Ljubomir Ljubojevic (1950) and Miguel Quinteros (1947). In the daytime they'd fight each other on the chess board, in the evening they'd explore the night life. Andersson they'd affectionately call 'Papa Ulf', the voice of reason who sometimes tried to temper their enthusiasm.

In his own country, Torre's popularity reached such heights that in 1975 he was asked to play in a movie. He doesn't deny that his good looks may have played a role, but believes that the fact that he was a grandmaster was of greater importance. The film was directed by Armando De Guzman and his co-star was the immensely popular Vilma Santos. 'She was a superstar. In the film she was one of my ladies. Because I had two sweethearts. I was playing two roles, a poor and a rich guy, who looked quite similar and interchanged roles. The rich guy was kind of unhappy because he felt that the people around him glorified him because of his wealth. He could not feel genuine. So he wanted to feel a genuine love or friendship. And the poor guy, he wanted to earn money and therefore he wanted to go to Manila. The mother of his girlfriend was always criticizing him, telling her: You have no future with that fisherman! So he went to Manila and went to the house of the rich guy and maybe wanted to rob him and then they had a fight. But the rich man knew martial arts and he won. And then he looked at the other guy and was surprised that he looked the same. And he got the idea. So what happened, the girlfriend of the poor guy became eventually the girlfriend of the rich guy, and the rich guy's girlfriend went to the poor guy. And the barrio woman was very angry when she finally learned about it. She slapped the rich guy, because they were playing with her feelings. But eventually they lived happily ever after.'

The name of the movie was *Basta't Isipin Mong Mahal Kita*, which means: Always remember I love you. 'It was named after a famous song with the same title. Did you know I had to sing in the movie?' I didn't, and before I know it Eugene Torre starts singing the song with a soft and sensitive voice. He likes singing, there's no doubt about that. Later I will find further evidence on *YouTube*, where he can be seen performing with the Chessmen Band and singing the *Pinoy Chess Song* at the start of a simul. There's also a video of a Christmas concert in 2009 where in front of an enthusiastic audience he renders the title song of the movie in a duet with Maely Ann.

The movie was his only venture into the world of cinema, as all his time was claimed by chess. For the same reason he also relinquished his studies at the Mapua Institute of Technology where he was an undergraduate in business administration. He jokes that with his family name (torre being the Spanish word for rook) he was predestined to be a chess player. The game fills his life till this day and he feels it's been worth it. 'I've spent practically my whole life in chess. There must be something, no? Because I believe in chess, that it is like life. So why not translate into life what chess teaches you? It can help you, slowly but surely, if you put it in your consciousness. Then slowly you discover how to apply it in life. Is this a good move, smoking? (Laughs) I think it's very obvious that it's a bad move, you'd better stop soon. Yeah, a good thing I got out of that, although I was not a heavy smoker. Playing chess improves many of your qualities: focus, calculation, many of our attributes like discipline, countless are being developed by playing chess. You know that many of our Presidents have been good chess players. Many great achievers, they may not be professional players, but they play chess. Even great actors and scientists play chess. Benjamin Franklin. As a matter of fact, Benjamin Franklin had a chess code and I try to memorize it. (Citing from memory) A game of chess is not merely an idle amusement. Several valuable qualities of the mind, useful in the course of life, are (hesitates), I forgot already, it's like, are promoted so as to become habits (Franklin's literal words were: are to be acquired or strengthened by it, so as to become habits, ready on all occasions – DJtG). For life is a kind of chess. That's what he said (laughs). Benjamin Franklin, you know, in 'The Morals of Chess'. He's not a professional chess player! But he is one good example of someone who applied what he learned from chess in his endeavours. He is an achiever of a lot of things. A

scientist, inventor, publisher, diplomat, printer, whatever, politician. He was all-round. Even Albert Einstein, so many great people... I like to believe that in part of their great achievements chess helped them. Even our national hero, Doctor Jose Rizal played chess. I was surprised when I saw a stamp on which he was playing chess.'

The parallels between chess and life have come to him over the years. He likes to draw comparisons when he speaks to young chess players to help them succeed in life. 'The king is the most important piece in chess and you have to be very careful to defend it. Likewise your health is your king. Smoking threatens your health, so that's very bad for your king, you'd better stop. We have only one life. Of course whatever is your profession or your career, is your king. And integrity is your king. You cannot do anything without integrity. First you have to have a good heart, good intentions. If you have bad intentions, like criminals scheming, I'd rather you don't apply your findings in life. If you wisely apply what you learn in chess in life, you definitely gain many benefits. I tell them that as a student, your schooling, your education, is your king, so you better protect that. By telling it in the language of chess they maybe relate to it more. Instead of saying education is very important, you have to study! Because in chess they know they have to protect their king. Many of the students I am talking to will not become champions, but they will play chess, hoping that whatever career they come into they will be able to apply what they learn in chess. If you do well in chess it's worth it.'

That his ideas are more than a philosophical amusement he could prove when eight years ago a friend approached him with an offer to become business partners. Chess remains Torre's priority, but these days he spends some of his time as president of a real estate development company that is aptly called Fianchetto. 'I told him that I knew nothing about construction and he said, just use your chess knowledge. Apply it and you'll be OK. Because he is also a chess player and he was also using chess when he was thinking what to decide or what to do.' In the meantime he has also gathered general experience, but he remains loyal to his chess approach. 'Like in construction, the pawns are the workers. And then we have our manager and the executives, they are the officers. But in chess it's actually the pawns, although they are the least in value, that determine how the officers can act or can become effective. So it's very important that you take care of the pawns. The pawn structure. Use them well, you know. There should be harmony, they should not be overburdened.'

> 'Even Albert Einstein, so many great people... I like to believe that in part of their great achievements chess helped them.'

Eugene Torre keeps returning to the Olympiad because he continues to love chess and because it remains a perfect occasion to meet old friends. Drinking in the atmosphere he feels that on the one hand nothing has changed, while on the other hand he is convinced that the game is being threatened. He's been thinking a lot of ways to keep chess alive and hopes that his suggestions will be heard. In order to reduce the number of draws, he's been advocating a new scoring system. The basis of the idea is the abolition of stalemate. In case of stalemate the player who 'stalemates' his opponent receives two points, while the opponent gets one point. This differs from a normal draw, which brings both players one and a half points. A win is rewarded with three points, a loss still leaves you empty-handed. The idea has already been used in two tournaments in the Philippines and he hopes others will follow suit.

An even bigger threat he sees in the computer. He often avoids theoretical

**February 6, 2010, at the Fianchetto Realty Development office. A casual game with Florencio Campomanes, less than three months before his death.**

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discussions by playing 1.b3 or the London System, 1.d4 with an early ♗f4, or the Torre Attack, even though this may force him to explain to his opponent that it was not his invention but that of Carlos Torre's. Of course he also uses engines like Houdini, there is no way around it, but he believes the influence of the computer has gotten out of hand. 'It's like a forest, you know. The machine is denuding the forest. Or like a woman. Someone said, chess, like a woman, can make a man happy. Now the mystery of the woman is being exposed, no more mystery. We men prefer a woman with mysteries. That's my feeling about these computers. Maybe it will take one generation, or many years, but I know that in the future Chess960 will be embraced by the world. Or Fischerandom. Some organizers feel more comfortable calling it Chess960. I told Bobby, "Bobby, but how can we promote this Fischerandom? Because many hate your guts, you know." And he said, "I'll tell you Eugene. You can kill a good man, but you cannot kill a good idea." That's what he said. I told Totti (his countryman Casto Abundo – DJtG), why don't FIDE, now you have new ratings for rapid and blitz, why don't you also make a rating for Random chess? And then give the organizers the option which one they want to organize. That will further popularize the game of chess.'

Bobby Fischer is the subject of our conversation the second evening that we meet. During the match that Fischer played against Boris Spassky in 1992 in Yugoslavia, he asked Torre to be his second and in the years that followed they kept meeting. So far, Torre has been mostly silent about his friendship with Fischer, preferring to keep his memories to himself and thinking that one day he may write a book about his experiences. Fischer, who first was his idol and later became his friend, is still very much on his mind. He remembers him with affection and compassion and several times I realize that he mostly speaks about him in the present tense.

The first time Torre saw the American was in 1967 when, at the invitation of Florencio Campomanes, he came to the Philippines to play a couple of short matches against local masters. The second time was in 1973, the year after the match in Reykjavik, when Fischer was invited to grace the opening of a big international tournament in Manila. On stage he played a short game against President Marcos. When Torre mentions his encounter with Marcos, a funny memory crosses his mind. 'In 1993, in Budapest, when we were talking about Marcos, he said: "You know, Eugene, you remember we had this opening ceremony? That game was not prearranged! You know me, Eugene, even with heads of state I don't prearrange." He was so impressed with Marcos. Bobby was always trying to play his best, but somehow Marcos was able to hold his position. I think they played some 15 moves. Usually you make a couple of moves, especially with a head of state, and then it's a draw. But they played. Finally people started clapping and it was time to shake hands. In Budapest Bobby said that Marcos' position was tenable. He was impressed.'

'I don't even ask him about his father. No, no. Because I know Bobby. Somehow I have an idea of what he doesn't want to talk about.'

*How did you get to know him privately?*

'In 1976 he came back in the Philippines, again care of Campomanes. They were trying to have this match against Karpov outside of FIDE. He was there before going to Japan. Campo was very busy, also looking for sponsors, so Campo needed somebody to accompany Bobby, and I was just one of those people. Cardoso, who is also a chess player, also accompanied him. And I think Naranja and Balinas, our second grandmaster, he has passed away already. We rode a boat and I don't know if we played some blitz chess, maybe we analysed a few games.

'I became closer to him when in 1986 I suddenly had this call that he was in Manila, which I didn't know. He was the guest of one family that I knew, and he said he wanted to see me. He was about to leave in a few days. So we had a long chat. We were together for two or three nights before he departed for the U.S.'

*This was in his 'wilderness years'.*

'Yes, he was incognito, he was rarely seen. Then every time I was in the U.S. or passing through the U.S. he would fetch me. There was a time when I stayed in my sister-in-law's house in California. We invited him and he said, OK. He always wanted to walk and talk. Lots of walking and talking.'

*When you met him in '86, he had changed considerably. He had grown a beard, become heavier...*

'Yes, heavier, a little bit of a moustache. At the time he was not so taking care of himself, he had problems.'

*Did that shock you? Didn't you ask him, Bobby...*

'No, no, no. I am very careful asking Bobby about, you know... I don't even ask him about his father. No, no. Because I know Bobby. Somehow I have an idea of what he doesn't want to talk about. I can make queries with him, other things, but like the father, that was a very sensitive issue. Otherwise, Bobby, like, do you have friends? What were you doing in the U.S.? That was OK. But he was very silent about the father.'

*Did he tell stories from his childhood?*

'Yeah. I don't know how young he was, but he was telling me about his mother. That they were following his mother, thinking that they were maybe spies or what, I don't know. That's why his mother told him, if somebody asks you,

don't answer, because if you answer they will make up stories. Whatever you say, they will use it against you. Just tell them, I've got nothing to say to you. Or just stay quiet. That's why he was not talking when he was apprehended in Pasadena (in 1982, an arrest that resulted in the pamphlet *I was tortured in the Pasadena jailhouse* – DJtG). He was not talking. What's your name? (Firmly closes his mouth and laughs) That's what his mother advised him.'

*What kind of things did he want to know from you?*

'We talk a lot, you know. But I felt that he was missing a genuine love. Especially when he was not able to return to America. At one point, when he was very down, he said, "Eugene, you love me?" I was a little bit taken aback... Of course, Bobby, I love you. "OK." He was so down. When he felt he was down, about a special girl, I told him, it's OK Bobby, time is a great healer. I think after three months, four months we saw each other again and he said (with a raised voice), "Eugene, you told me, time is a great healer. It's still there! The pain is still there!" (Laughs long) I said, you need more time, Bobby, more time. Eventually he got over it.'

*That was Zita? (Zita Rajczanyi, who was with Fischer during the match in Yugoslavia – DJtG)*

'Yeah, Zita. He had this special affection for Zita. I know Zita was writing him letters and maybe he liked the way she wrote. You know, as I was saying, he wanted a genuine relationship, with someone he liked. Also her level of conversation is a little bit higher, maybe he liked that also.'

*First he was your idol, then you get to know him, you like him, but there must have been difficult moments. How did you deal with them? Or were there no difficult moments?*

'Bobby? Whooff! (Laughs wholeheartedly) He loved so much to talk, until the wee hours of the morning. I hardly had sleep, you know, during those times when he was really down, in '93, after the match. We were in Budapest. Partly because of Zita and because he

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"Eugene, you love me?" I was a little bit taken aback... Of course, Bobby, I love you. "OK."

could not go back to the U.S. Of course he missed his mother, especially his mother. Every time we were walking in Budapest, most of the time, at night, sometimes after we had watched a movie, he would call the U.S. and talk to his mom. At one time he said, Eugene, come here, talk to my mom. One time. But most of the time he is talking with his mother. His mother had a beautiful voice for her age, I was so surprised. I think that's also where Bobby got his voice. Because Bobby's voice was nice to listen to. When he was talking with his mom, I move around, I go away so I could not hear. Sometimes 15 minutes, 20 minutes.'

*You were with him during the match, you were in Budapest, how could you spend so much time with him?*

'After the match I went home. Then he said, Eugene, come back here again. Bring balut! These duck eggs, he liked them. It's a delicacy in the Philippines. He could finish five or six eggs. When he invited me to come back to Belgrade, he didn't tell me we would go to Hungary, but he already had that idea. He had the intention of hiring an airplane. Because he was worried that if we crossed the border, from Belgrade to Budapest, he might be apprehended. So we were in the car, he was very nervous. I was also nervous, for him. It went smoothly, just like any regular check. I don't think they recognized him, but they saw a U.S. passport.'

*He was not used to giving people things. Did he say, I'll pay your ticket?*

'That was understood. Of course! (laughs) He also gave me something. All expenses paid and some, you know.'

*What was the reason why he felt so comfortable with you?*

'Because primarily, I think, (hesitates) he was sure that I am not a Jew. Because very few Jews are from Asia. This was very important. That's why he got me as a second. He didn't say this, but this is what I assume, because during the match he was afraid that his ideas would be telegraphed and things. And I think, maybe he also liked somehow whatever I did in chess. Maybe he also liked that I am friendly, that I am harmless. "I think that Eugene is harmless." (laughs) What he liked about me is that I always said, Bobby, you got everything? "Yeah, yeah." Your key? "Yeah." I reminded him when we were about to leave. You have everything, Bobby? (With Fischer's intonation) "That's what I like about you, Eugene!"'

*You saw how his dark sides grew darker. Were you worried about him? Did you ever think, what can I do about this?*

'No, you know, Bobby was not so bad. He refrained from interviews and live radio. He didn't like that. He wanted a very quiet life. To him his privacy was very important. But he got crazy when his memorabilia and personal belongings were taken away (he kept them in a storage in Pasadena; when the storage house got a new owner, this man noticed that the account was behind in payment and auctioned off the belong-

ings Fischer kept there – DJtG). I think a part of him died when that happened. That was a turning point. He called me up, he was crying. "Eugene, those fucking... they got my..." Something like that. He was crying. "You get me to be interviewed!" I was surprised. "I want it live! Because I don't want them to delete anything." Why did they take these belongings from him? That made him a monster, he was so mad he was crying over the phone. I felt bad also. Why they did that to Bobby, you know, for a measly 480 dollars?'

*And the next radio interviews, he also wanted those himself? Or were these people from Bomba Radio in the Philippines inviting him?*

'No, no. Always it was him. I cannot refuse him, because I felt really bad about what they did to him. Never mind that he could not go back to the U.S., never mind that he was not around with his mom when she died, he could take that. But when they took his belongings. It's like his family, those belongings. He is very careful with everything he kept in that storage room.'

*He could be a difficult person before, but nothing compared to what he became?*

'Oooff! Of course. Nothing compared to that... Because first of all, he was shying away from interviews, so how could he hurt people? He didn't want to be interviewed.'

*But he must have had his anti-Semitic rants in his own small circle.*

'Yeah. But it was lighter, not so much. Now he turned red and was shouting. He had not been like that before. He was anti-Semitic, but much much more mellow. There was a big difference when these memorabilia were taken from him.'

*During the first half of the match in Yugoslavia, in Sveti Stefan, all of you spent a lot of time together. There is Bobby, there is you, there is Zita, Gligoric, was there a nice atmosphere?*

'Nice, yeah. It was also a nice location, the beach, the sea. We had a good time. Of course if Bobby loses a game or two then everything becomes gloomy (laughs). But there were more laughs, because he won more games. Sometimes he would laugh to his heart's content.'

*Could he tell a good joke?*

'Yes, he was telling jokes that he usually had heard from Las Vegas. He liked those jokes, by the black comedians.'

*How long did you stay with him in Hungary?*

'My visa was expiring and I was already up to my limit, because I hardly had sleep, you know. What happened was that we would talk up till four or five in the morning. Then he'd go to sleep and I'd think, ho, it's a good thing Bobby is sleeping. Finally I could sleep. (Laughs at the memory) And then after I doze off for 30 minutes, by that time he is awake again. And he says, Eugene, Eugene! (Laughs). I think I collapsed already. That's why I said, Bobby, I have a friend, he is an International Master, I trust him. Because I have to go back to the Philippines, my visa is expiring. I cannot tell him that I am collapsing (laughs). Then somebody took my place, Ricardo de Guzman, a Philippino IM.'

*And after '93?*

'I was going back and forth to Hungary, maybe in '94 I was still going there. Then he decided to go to Tokyo with Miyoko. And then when his visa in Tokyo expires, he will go to the Philippines, sometimes Hong Kong and I would see him.'

*Did you keep a diary?*

'No I didn't. I don't know if I mentioned it to you, but we played a game, it was drawn, a practice game. But when I was about to keep the scoresheet, he said, no, no, Eugene. So I think he didn't want me to have a copy of the game. I respect that. To me he is a king. You have to respect the king. I could have reconstructed it, if I wanted to, but out of respect I didn't. I forgot it. Maybe he kept it in one of his many boxes. He had a lot of stuff in Budapest, in the apartment of Benkö, but I think at one point after Bobby died, Miyoko went to Budapest to get those.'

*Did he often call you?*

'Yes, sometimes he just wanted to talk and he would call me. Of course he would call me when he had problems and he wanted to talk to me. He had other persons to call, too. There was a time it was me he chose to talk to. Sometimes he just wanted to know my opinion or maybe he just wanted to have an outlet with someone he could trust. Bobby would also send me articles that he wanted me to read. As evidence for his opinions. Bobby was always very fair. He always wanted to prove why he said something.'

*Did you have the feeling that over the years, well, I don't know how you see this, but that his mental problems increased?*

'I don't know, but in the interviews he was very clear. When he mentioned something he explained it. I think his explanations are quite logical. When he is against nuclear energy, all these things, he was reading about the subject, you know. He is very logical in his reasoning. But he became like a wild, injured animal after he lost these belongings. This also greatly affected him mentally and physically when he was arrested in Japan. He was sending me international articles about passports. You have to give the owner the opportunity or notice to defend himself. You don't just grab a passport. He was not given the chance. In the law the passport holder should be given the opportunity first to defend himself. Then he was there and put in jail, he was boxed, you know. And I don't know, he is sitting there, is not in control. When I was with him, he really liked healthy food.'

*Healthy but a lot.*

'A lot, yeah. But sometimes he would only eat once, at most twice a day. He doesn't take breakfast. He woke up late, maybe twelve.'

*How do you see him as a person? Was he an essentially innocent person who met with some blows of fate and had a special talent? Or were there dark forces in him?*

'Let us just say, look, if you have a special child, we give some extra attention, extra care, sometimes you give

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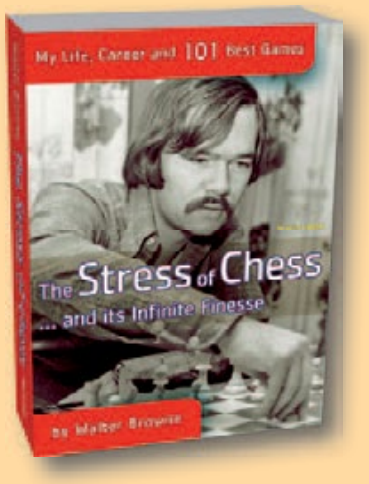


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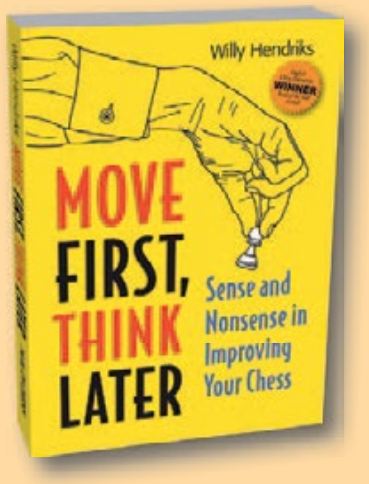


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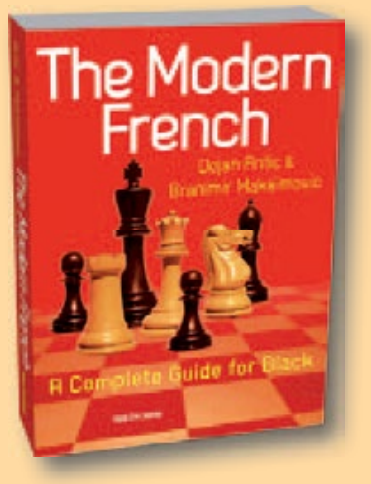


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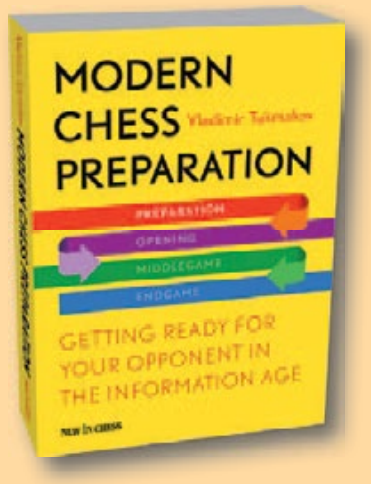
**GM Jacob Aagaard**

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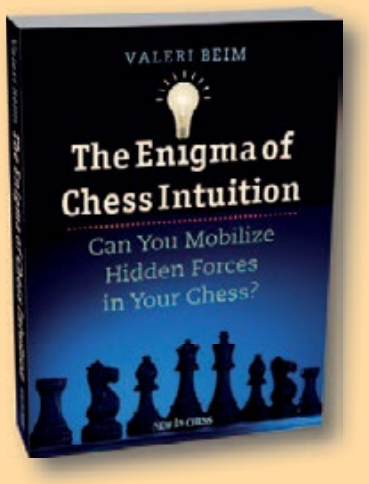


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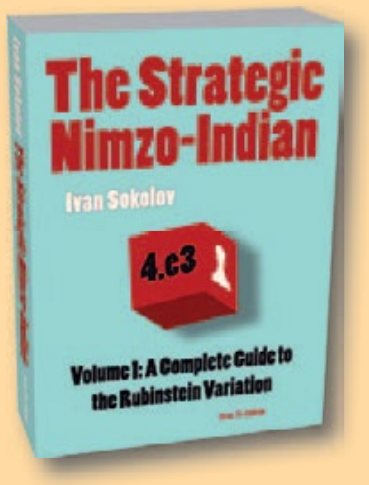
**German Correspondence Chess Federation**

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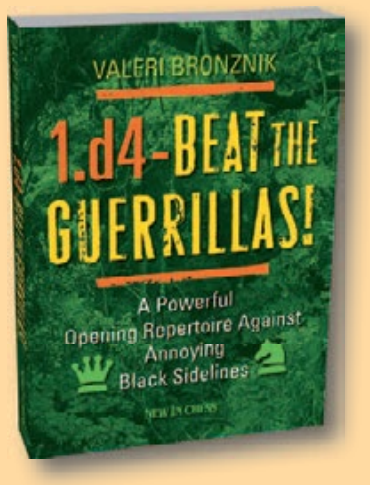


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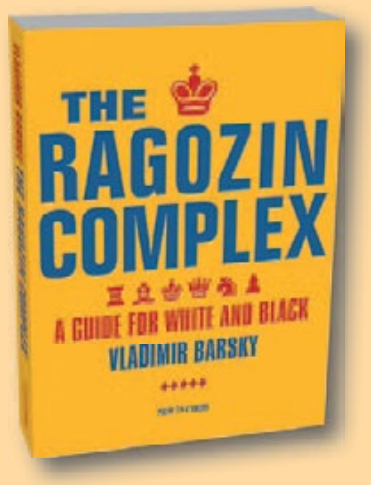


*"A fine example of how a quality opening book should be written."*
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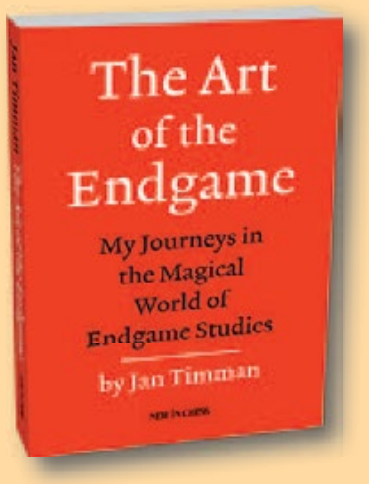


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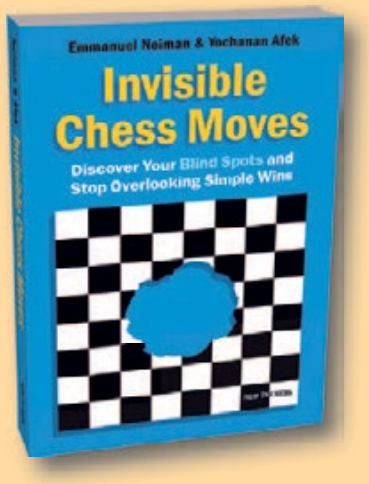


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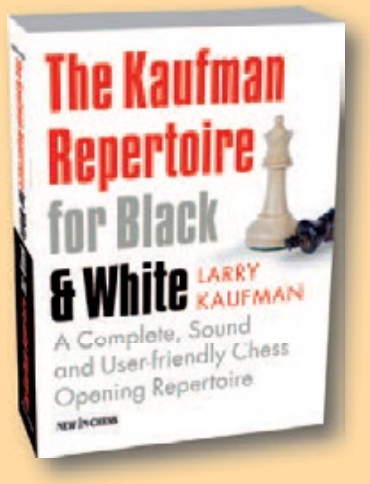


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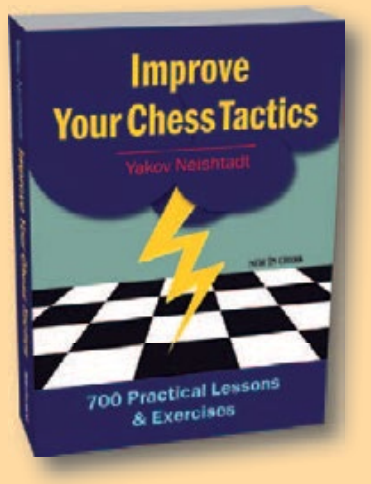


*"Superb."*
**GM Paul Motwani, The Scotsman**

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some exemption. Bobby was like that, the way you know he was brought up. He has this special talent, gift, but because of his upbringing he is some special child. I was hoping to be considerate on him. He should be treated with the care, the extra understanding you give a special child. And then let's enjoy his gift, you know. Look, Bobby, let's understand him. But anyway, let's enjoy what he can offer, because he is really a brilliant chess player.'

*Could he upset you?*

'Very seldom. I get upset also, but only rarely. Because I have plenty of patience (laughs).'

*When was the last time you saw him?*

'Oh, a long time ago. I do not even recall. Because even when he was incarcerated in Japan I have not seen him. We were having radio interviews but I was not seeing him. The last phone call I had was when he was already in Iceland. It was always him who called. I never called him. Maybe I should have called him, just to say, how are you, Bobby? But I did not have his number.'

*Did you consider going to Iceland?*

'No, no. Unless he would ask me. When he did not ask me to join him in Iceland, I thought he is in good hands. I didn't know that he was already gravely sick. I didn't know. I was also surprised when I learned he died. Had I known, I would have called him. Bobby, you are OK? You want me to be there? I didn't know. I was so surprised, you know. Because knowing Bobby, he is always careful about his food intake, milk, healthy food.'

*He didn't want to have an operation. He didn't trust the doctors...*

'Yeah, I believe that. He did not like the idea of cutting your body.'

*When you were having discussions with him, was there a chance that you could convince him and that he would acknowledge that you were right?*

'Yeah, sometimes, sometimes (in a tone as if this was the most natural thing).'

*Did he allow physical contact? Could you throw an arm around him to comfort him?*

'(Immediately) No, because he is too big (laughs). No, no, he is not like that. Maybe with a special woman, somebody he trusted already and he has these special feelings. Even with women he was very passive, he did not want to show aggressiveness. Let's say if he wants to meet a woman, and he is already assured that it's OK, only then.'

*Do you miss him?*

'Of course, of course.'

*Was it worth it?*

'Oh, of course. I am very fortunate to have had this time with him, very. Because when he suffers, I can understand the sufferings.'

*Did you have that all through your life, this understanding character?*

'Yeah, because one has to have the ability to put yourself in the shoes of others. They call this the empaths. They can put themselves in the shoes of others and think, how would it be if I were like that? If I am poor, how would I feel? Because the family I came from was not so rich, you know. I experienced the life of the poor, the life of working. When I was young, I was so moveable, you know, I was selling newspapers, comics, I was doing everything. That means that I have a wide horizon of experience in life. Poor, kind of travelling, then playing chess, staying in hotels, comfortable life. I can, I think, relate in many instances with other people's situations. That's why I think many successful people, they usually come from poor families. They remember where they come from, it's some kind of education where they came from. The challenges where they come from, that made them stronger, tougher.'

*Did he have a very good memory?*

'Yeah. He knew a lot of songs. In one of the interviews he said to the anchorman, Can I sing? Before we enter this interview? Yeah, sure, Bobby, the anchorman said. Do you know what he sang? (Begins singing) All you need is love, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah. All you need is love, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah. All you need is love, love, love (is all you need). I was touched, you know.'

*The anchorman probably thought this was funny, but he was totally sincere.*

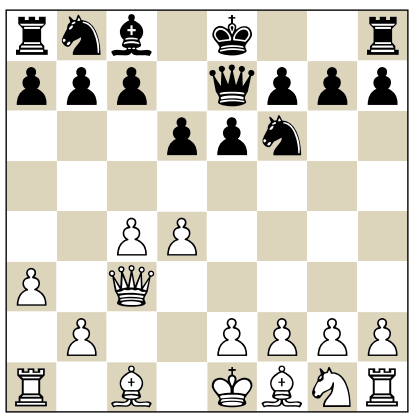
'That's why I was telling you earlier, he wanted to feel love, genuine love. You see, he sang that song. (Sings again) All you need is love, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah.' ■

**A contented Bobby Fischer after the match in 1992. Behind him Svetozar Gligoric and Eugene Torre with his wife Marilin and daughter Nicole.**

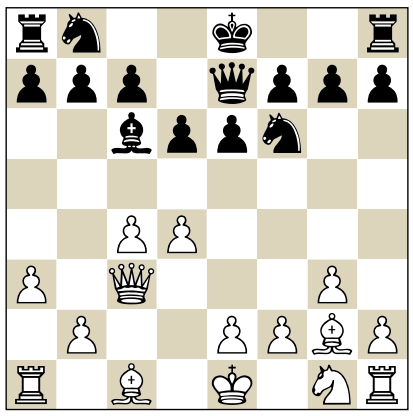
NOTES BY
**Eugene Torre**

NI 24.7 – E32
**Nigel Short**
**Eugene Torre**
Istanbul 2012 (8)

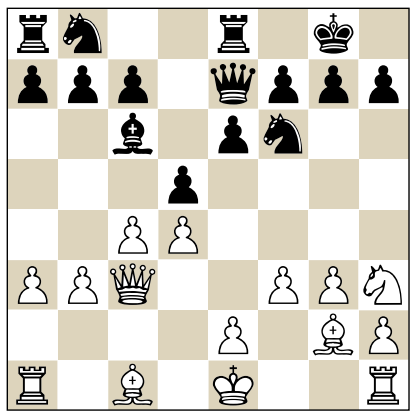
**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 d6**
This I played to get out of the more popular lines. I had expected him to play 1.e4, so I had not looked at this in my preparation. I had checked 4... d6 with the computer on some other occasion and seen that it was fine for Black. Now I was on my own and had to think for myself. But so did he.
**5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♕e7**



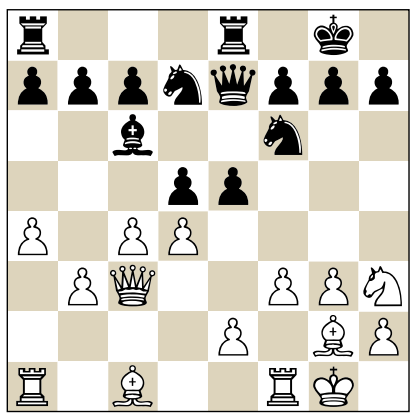
A normal move in this kind of Nimzo-Indian position, with the idea of playing ...e5 at some point.
This was over-the-board inspiration. How I wish it could always be over-the-board inspiration!
**7.g3 ♗d7**
To put the bishop on c6.
**8.♗g2 ♗c6**



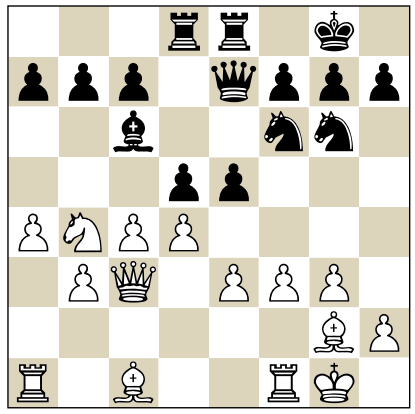
**9.f3**
With the idea of 10.e4, gaining space. He could also have played 9.d5 exd5 10.cxd5, when I was planning to go 10...♗b5, when he cannot develop normally with 11.♘f3 because of mate on e2. I could also go 10...♗xd5 11.♗xd5 ♘xd5, when after 12.♕xg7 I would have 12...♕e5; but I liked 10...♗b5 better because it's only one move! He then probably has to play 11.g4 or first insert 11.a4 ♗a6 and then 12.g4.
**9...d5 10.b3 0-0 11.♘h3 ♖e8**



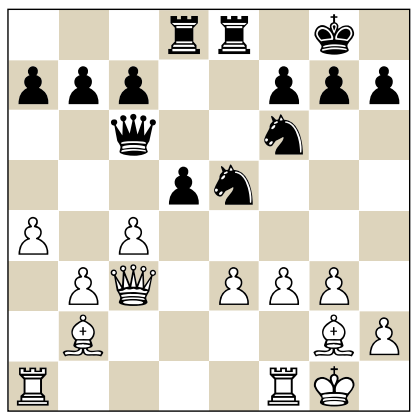
Again with the idea of playing ...e5.
**12.0-0**
I thought it was about equal here.
**12...♘bd7 13.a4**
Since he was about to play ♗a3 now, I had to push the e-pawn.
**13...e5**



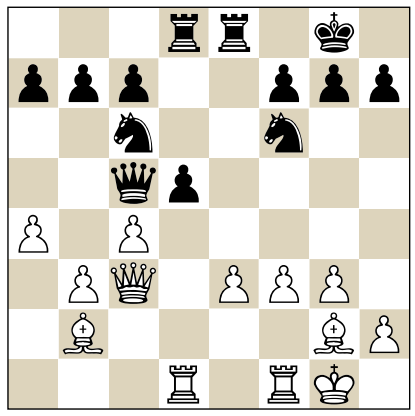
**14.e3** Now 14.♗a3 was impossible because of 14...exd4 15.♕xd4 ♕xe2, and White has no real compensation for the pawn. But after the text I had to do something against the bishop coming to a3 and to give some squares to my queen.
**14...♘f8 15.♘f2** Now, after 15.♗a3, I have 15...♕e6, and in case of 16.♘g5 I go 16...♕f5, and I am still OK.
**15...♖ad8 16.♘d3 ♘g6 17.♘b4**



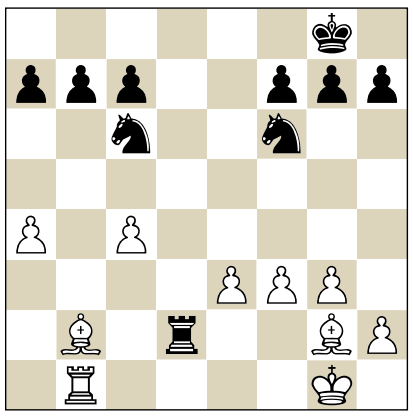
He wants to take my bishop and secure the bishop pair.
**17...♕e6 18.♘xc6 ♕xc6**
To my mind the position is still equal. He has the bishop pair, which generally is good, but somehow his pawn-structure is a bit loose.
**19.dxe5** He didn't want me to play ...e4, and open up the position.
**19...♘xe5 20.♗b2**



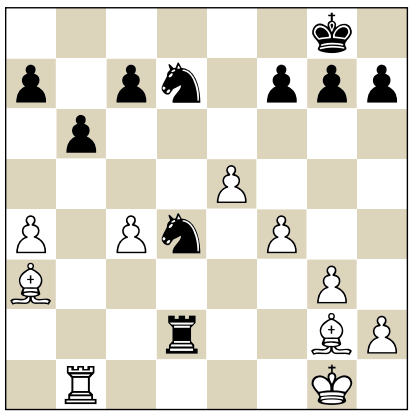
**20...♕c5**
I could not play 20...dxc4 because of 21.f4, losing a piece.
**21.♖ad1**
Defending against the threat of 21... dxc4, which is now made impossible because of 22.♖xd8, and I lose the knight.
**21...♘c6**



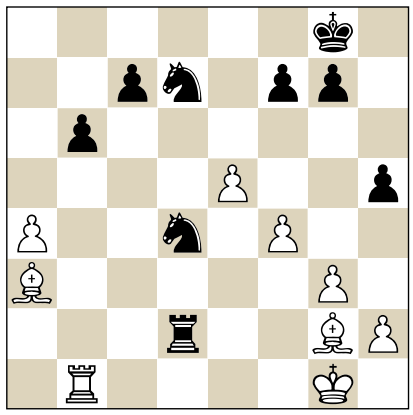
**22.♖fe1**
He could have tried 22.♖xd5 ♕xe3+ 23.♕xe3 ♖xe3 24.♗xf6 gxf6 25.♖fd1, but after 25...♖xd5 26.cxd5 ♘b4 Black is fine, for instance 27.f4 ♖xb3 28.♖c1 ♔g7 29.♖xc7 ♖b1+ 30.♔f2 ♖b2+, and White has to settle for perpetual check.
**22...dxc4 23.♖xd8 ♖xd8 24.♕xc4**
Black would also be fine if White played 24.bxc4 to keep the queens on.
**24...♕xc4 25.bxc4 ♖d2**
He has the bishop pair, but I have the open d-file and an active rook.
**26.♖b1**



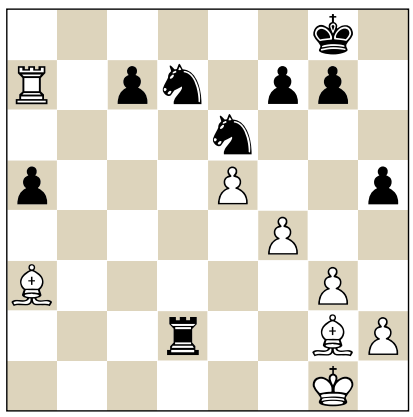
He went for this position counting on this move to exert pressure on my queenside.
**26...b6 27.f4 ♘e7**
The best square for the knight, because from here it could also go to f5.
**28.e4 ♘d7 29.♗a3 ♘c6 30.e5 ♘d4**



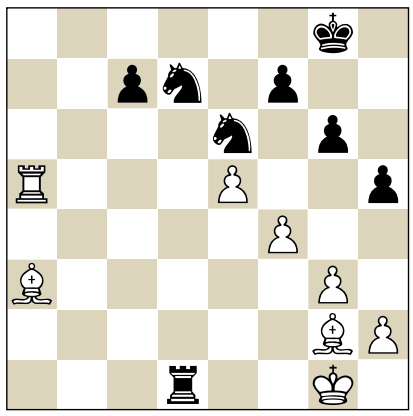
**31.c5**
To stop me from playing ...c5.
**31...h5**
Because of the back rank mate in some lines I have to give my king some air.
**32.cxb6 axb6**



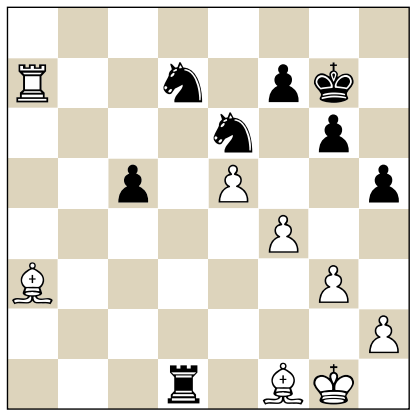
**33.a5** He cannot improve his position and has to do something. Otherwise I could play 33...♖a2, for instance.
**33...bxa5 34.♖b7 ♘e6**
A good move.
**35.♖a7** If he plays 35.f5 I go back with 35...♘d4, and after 36.♖xc7 I play 36...♘xe5, and White is in trouble.



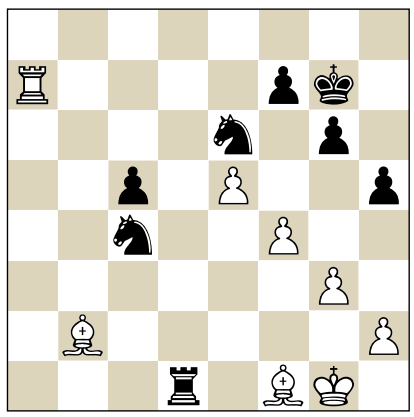
**35...g6** To stop f5.
**36.♖xa5** I thought this was favourable for me. I was also looking at lines like 36.♗e7 h4 37.♗c6 ♘d4, when taking the knight, 38.♗xd7, leads to perpetual check after 38...♘f3+.
**36...♖d1+**



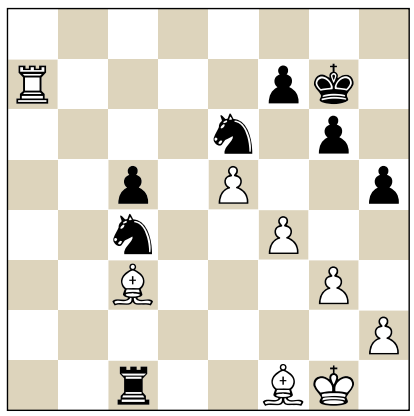
This I played because I was in time-trouble. I was expecting him to go 37.♔f2, when I would go back and check on d2 and think again. But he was ambitious and opted for:
**37.♗f1 c5** Stopping his bishop from entering my position.
**38.♖a8+ ♔g7 39.♖a7**
Perhaps 39.♖a6 was better, to stop my knight from jumping to b6.



**39...♘b6 40.♗b2 ♘c4**



**41.♗c3** The final mistake. Correct was 41.♖a2, when after 41...♖b1 (or 41...♘e3 42.♖a1 ♖d2 43.♗c1 ♘xf1 44.♗xd2 ♘xd2) 42.♖a1 ♖xf1+ 43.♔xf1 ♘xb2 44.♔e1 Black has some chances in the endgame of two ♘'s against ♖.
**41...♖c1**



This wins a piece because of the additional threat of 42...♘e3.
White resigned. ■

**Searching for (and finding!) the real Istanbul: Alexander Riazantsev, Alexandra Kosteniuk, Sergey Rublevsky, Natalia Pogonina, Nadezhda Kosintseva, Yuri Dokhoian, Tatiana Kosintseva and Evgeny Najer.**

What the Russian men failed to do by a hair's breadth, the Russian ladies did pull off in an equally close and breathtaking finish – seemingly against all odds. Russia's wipe-out victory in Khanty-Mansiysk two years ago, where they won all 11 matches, had not been forgotten, of course. But how could that help them now? Weren't the Chinese the top-seeds? And, even more telling, hadn't China humiliated them (4-0!) at the World Teams last year? Perhaps in the end, when all was said and done, it was only beneficial that they were not seen as the favourites. Perhaps it also helped that the Russians came to Istanbul with three coaches. One of them, **Evgeny Najer**, tells the tale.

ETERI KUBLASHVILI

# Russian delight

This was the first time I had been to an Olympiad. All the previous impressions, based on articles I had read and conversations with direct participants, left me anticipating a grand sporting festival.

As regards the competitive component, the tournament exceeded all expectations. The intrigue turned out to be exceptional – in both the men's and the women's tournament, everything hung by a thread literally to the last move. In the last round it was not only the matches of the leaders that provoked genuine interest, but also, for example, the battle between Bolivia and Algeria, because of their influence on the deciding tiebreaker.

But as for the organization... In one cult Soviet comedy there was the phrase: 'Istanbul – city of contrasts'. The impression was that the tournament organizers had decided to illustrate this assertion. Otherwise it is impossible to explain the choice of accommodation for the participants, the only virtue of which was the aircraft taking off every minute. And yet for many years Turkey has been heading the list of countries where my compatriots like to go on holiday. However, it is unlikely that any tourist agency in the world would risk proposing trips to this part of the city.

We experienced the 'contrasting nature' of Istanbul especially strongly, when on the free day the entire team went into the centre and wandered around the streets from the Blue Mosque to the Sea of Marmara, on the way looking in at the Hagia Sophia. I think I wasn't the only one to have his breath taken away.

But let's return to the tournament. For many years now in women's team

tournaments the list of favourites has remained unchanged. These are the teams from China, Russia, Georgia and Ukraine. I don't know what was the opinion of the world chess community, but in Russia most experts thought that it was unrealistic to fight with China for the gold medals. I think that the reason for this was not so much the absolute hegemony of World Champion Hou Yifan in women's events, but also the echo of the last world team championship, in which, despite their worthy second place, the Russians were crushed by the Oriental representatives to the tune of 4-0!

To be honest, the lack of pressure merely pleased us, although our training team (chief trainer Sergey Rublevsky, his assistant Alexander Riazantsev and me) realized that the potential of our girls was great, and that our team was feared by all the other teams, without exception. Before the start we thought that the main trump of our team was the balanced line-up. Two weeks before the Olympiad, our reserve Natalia Pogonina, who has a comparatively low rating, confidently won the Russian Championship with nearly all the strongest players participating. The tournament confirmed the correctness of this assessment: none of our girls failed, which allowed the load to be spread equally – before the final round all our participants had played an identical number of games.

Strangely enough, such tactics are not typical of team events. Usually the backbone of the team, on which the main burden falls, is known before the tournament, or, if the line-up is even, during the course of the tournament it turns out that one player is not in good form and, so to speak, 'sits on the bench'. A striking example is the Armenian men's team, which has sometimes won tournaments using only four players.

The strategy of constant rotation looks extremely logical, as towards the end of the tournament (when usually everything is decided) the freshness of the players becomes of decisive importance.

At first sight, the women's tournament was not hugely exacting: in the first four rounds we met teams that were significantly inferior to ours and we easily dealt with them, with victories gained in the range from 3-1 to 4-0. Our first serious opponents – the French team – were beaten confidently enough, despite the tricky 2½-1½ scoreline. The only fly in the ointment came in the Millet-Gunina game. After defending all the game and equalizing after the first time control, Valentina decided to play for a win, but in embarrassing fashion she overlooked a mate.

We reached the rest day as the sole leaders, as China had drawn with Ukraine.

And so, awaiting us in the 6th round was a match, the winners of which would become clear favourites in the tournament race: China-Russia. In recent times this fixture has become just as crucial as Canada-Russia in men's ice-hockey.

The first difficult question was the line-up for the match with China. In the end Valentina Gunina was left in reserve. Valya has had an outstanding year: she won the title of European champion, and the general progress in her play has been obvious. But at the start she was clearly not in form, whereas the other girls were in good order, with the exception perhaps of Tanya Kosintseva. For the moment on the top boards we had been mainly on the defensive, and this against not the strongest teams! Which somewhat put us on our guard...

**As the games have not started yet, these girls from Angola are happy to please the photographer.**

ARMAN KARAKHAYAN

Before the start of the match the Chinese girls demonstrated their confidence: they were laughing and being photographed. However, I was in no doubt that this was a mask, and perhaps also a psychological move. Inside, like our girls, they were undoubtedly keyed up.

Unfortunately, the decision taken by Tatiana and me – to play not the main opening in her repertoire, the Marshall Attack – proved faulty. I assumed that Hou would aim for a protracted, not a forcing battle, with the aim of exploiting her superiority in class, and that there would be one of the slow lines of the Ruy Lopez. But the Chinese girl took a subtle psychological decision and went in for a rare and extremely concrete variation. If Tanya had been familiar with it, she would probably have gained a draw without any trouble. But, alas, she had to solve difficult problems at the board and quickly ended up in a lost position. Then Hou played inaccurately and a chance opportunity appeared,

but Tanya failed to exploit it and we fell behind in the match.

In none of the other games did we stand worse. Pogonina did not manage to extract anything from a small opening advantage and drew. The two remaining games passed the first time control: Kosteniuk's complicated game against Ju Wenjun reached a level endgame, while Nadezhda Kosintseva was a piece up, but the position remained sharp and there were still technical difficulties. In the end, not without some adventures, Nadezhda won, and Alexandra drew.

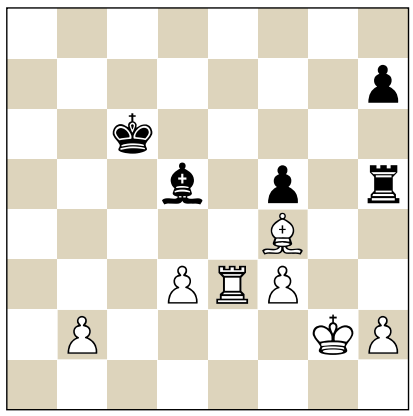
DAVID LLADA

**The Chinese women appeared in traditional costume at the opening ceremony. (l. to r.) Ju Wenjun, Huang Qian, Zhao Xue and World Champion Hou Yifan.**

We caught our breath. From the way the match went, and also in the tournament situation (we were still leading), 2-2 looked like a victory.

With hindsight I realize that the match took out of us a lot of strength and nervous energy, and for the next match with Poland, traditionally difficult opponents for us, we were unable to recover. In addition, Tatiana was unwell and we gave her the day off. But it was apparent that after the tense match with the Chinese neither Sasha (Kosteniuk) nor Nadya (Kosintseva) had recovered. After the time control we were facing a score of 1-3, or even ½-3½. The only cheering thing was that all the games continued. As Rublevsky rightly commented at one of the previous meetings: 'If the match is going badly, the main thing is to hold out to the first time control and then the match may well begin anew'. And indeed, miracles began to occur. Nadezhda, who by the 20th move was already in a difficult queen ending a pawn down, saved the game. Valentina more than once was close to defeat – in the end a draw. Alexandra, after overlooking a queen invasion in time-trouble, lost two pawns, then almost saved herself, but failed to find the best defence and lost. The match was saved by Natalia Pogonina, who by sheer will-power extracted a win in a dead-drawn endgame with opposite-coloured bishops. The slightly ironic term 'women's chess' reflected most fully what happened on the boards.

Initially the next match with Ukraine resembled a classic crunch match – on all the boards Black experienced definite problems. In the end we went down ½-1½ with black – Ushenina won an excellent game against Pogonina. But this was probably the only logical game. Nadezhda Kosintseva's win against Zhukova could be deemed a genuine thriller. The assessment of the position changed as in a kaleidoscope: better, much better, worse, on the 40th move Zhukova overlooked a winning coup, the position became equal, and in the end nevertheless a win. But compared with Tatiana's game, it looked like a mere melodrama.

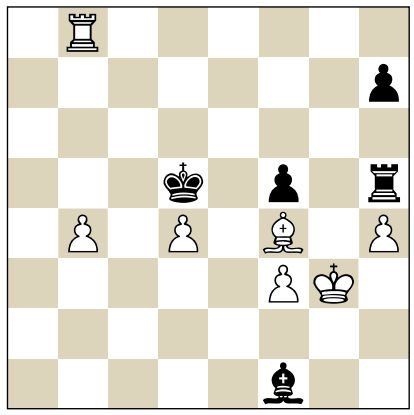


**T.Kosintseva-Lahno**
position after 42...♖h5

**43.♔g3**

Black is two pawns down, and her rook has no moves! Somewhere around here I stopped following the events in this game. It would appear that Tatiana made the same mistake...

**43...♔c5 44.♖e8 ♗b7 45.♖b8 ♗a6 46.b4+ ♔c6 47.d4 ♗f1 48.h4 ♔d5**



**49.b5??**

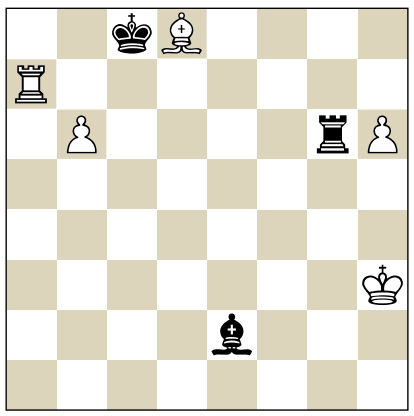
49.♖d8+ ♔c4 50.d5 would have won instantly.

**49...♔xd4 50.b6 ♔c5 51.♗g5 ♗a6 52.♔f4 h6 53.♗d8**

Of course, here too White is winning, but some technique is now needed. In addition, Tanya began violating our patent rule – not to think for more than three planes!

And within 60 moves in continuous

time-trouble the following position arose.

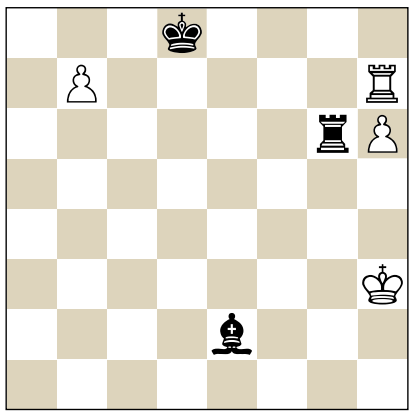


position after 111...♖g6

**112.♖h7?**

The titanic efforts would have been crowned by 112.h7 ♖h6+ 113.♗h4, when for the h-pawn Black has to give up her rook.

**112...♔xd8 113.b7**



**113...♖xh6+!**

Tanya was counting on 113...♖b6 114.♖h8+ ♔c7 115.b8♕+ ♖xb8 116.♖xb8 ♔xb8 117.h7.

**114.♖xh6 ♔c7 115.♖h7+ ♔b8 116.♔g3 ♗a6**

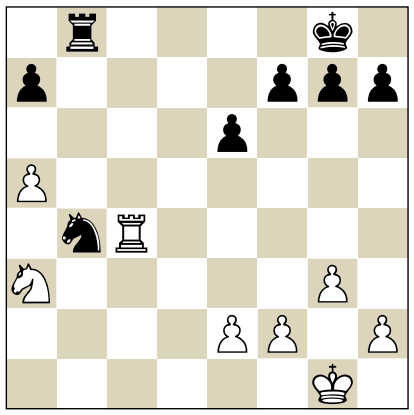
And, of course, this endgame could not be won. To Kosintseva's credit, it must be mentioned that after such a vexing fiasco she did not come unstuck, but, on the contrary, she began playing more powerfully and at the finish was already the real leader of the team.

I think that as regards the number of nerve cells lost by the players and their trainers, this match was a record one for the entire Olympiad.

To be honest, the mood in the team that evening was not very bright – we all realized that the chances of first place were now minimal. We could hardly believe that the Chinese, who by that time had played all the crunch matches and were leading us by a point, would weaken. But the most important thing was the depressing quality of play demonstrated by our team in the last two matches.

It is hard to say for sure what was the main reason, but in the last three rounds our team was transformed. India, Armenia and Kazakhstan were defeated with an obvious superiority. There were no more downswings, either in the matches, or the individual games. I think that the many-times Olympiad champion Sergey Rublevsky was able to inspire the team at the critical moment of the tournament, and what also told was the fighting character of our girls, who were able to mobilize themselves and professionally finish off the last few matches.

In the match with India a flamboyant win was registered by Valentina Gunina.



**Gunina-Karavade**
position after 27...♖b8

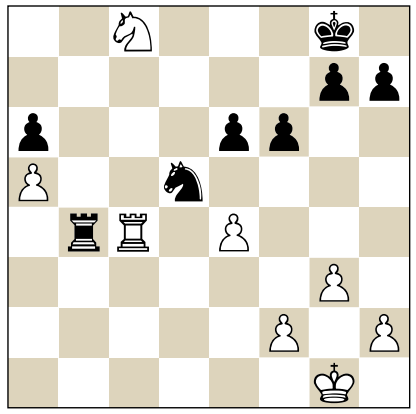
To make her position acceptable, Black lacks an escape square for her king, but she is unable in fact to obtain this tempo.

**28.♘b5 a6 29.♘d6 f6 30.♘c8 ♘d5**

The threat of ♘b6 is quite serious. In the event of 30...♔f7 31.♘b6 ♘d5 32.♘xd5 exd5 33.♖c7+! ♔g6 34.♖c6 White should win without difficulty.

**31.e4 ♖b4?**

Falling into a camouflaged trap.



**32.♖c1!!** Very pretty. This unusual tactic is typical of Valentina's play. The black knight is unexpectedly caught in the middle of the board, since the capture of the pawn loses.

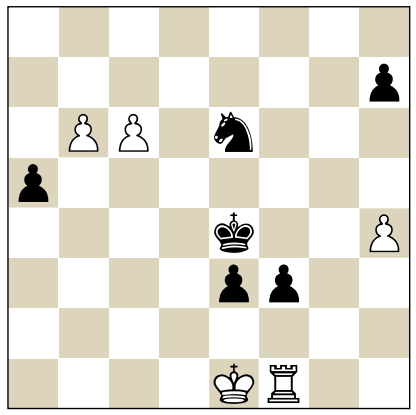
**32...♖a4**

32...♖xe4 33.♘d6.

**33.exd5 exd5 34.♘d6**

And soon Black admitted defeat.

After crushing Armenia 3½-½ we unexpectedly caught up with the Chinese team. A pleasant surprise was provided by the Kazakhstan players, who played, so to speak, the match of their lives. Here is the finish to one of the key games of the women's Olympiad, with the score standing at 2-1 in China's favour.



**Davletbayeva-Ding Yixin**
position after 50...f3

From the opening White had an absolutely won position, but the Chinese player defended tenaciously and appeared to be close to a draw, but...

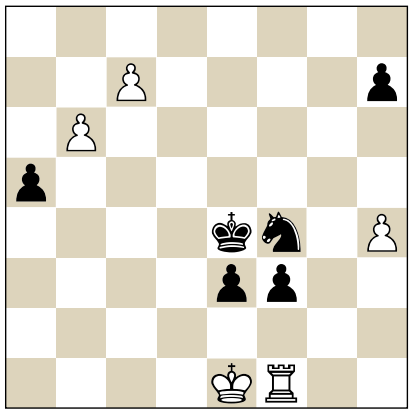
**51.c7**

51.b7 ♘d4 leads only to a draw.

**51...♘f4**

Here many male grandmasters watching the game decided that the Chinese

player had managed to save herself, but...



**52.♖f2!!** In nominations for the move of the Olympiad, this is undoubtedly the main favourite.
**52...♘d3+ 53.♔f1 ♘xf2 54.c8♕ ♔d4 55.♕d7+ ♔c5 56.b7 ♘e4 57.b8♕ ♘d2+ 58.♕xd2 exd2 59.♕d8 ♔c4 60.♕xd2**
Black resigned

Before the last round we were slightly behind China on the tie-break. We were drawn against Kazakhstan, and they against Bulgaria. We had to win, and desirably by the biggest margin possible. And the team performed this task brilliantly, winning by a whitewash. Meanwhile, China extracted a win by the minimum margin, although, as later calculations showed, even a 4-0 win would not have given them first place.

In my view, for the second time in succession the Russians quite deservedly won the Olympiad gold medals. The main reason was the afore-mentioned long 'bench', so that in contrast to the Chinese we were painlessly able to make changes. In addition, our bench was in the direct sense longer, in view of the presence of three trainers. During the tournament we several times heard jokes along the lines of: 'where are you hiding the other two trainers'. Doubts were also expressed about the advisability: 'what was the point, since it was not apparent that after the opening you crushed anyone'.

But, firstly, there were instances of a direct attack, for example the opening rout in the Kosteniuk-Soumya game, where the work of Caro-Kann expert Alexander Riazantsev was very obvious. But in the majority of cases our opponents did indeed deviate from their favourite schemes and possibilities of demonstrating our preparation did not present themselves. But from my observations, in women's chess such tactics are fraught with danger – after preparing a variation directly before a game you may obtain a normal position, but then to play it spontaneously will be difficult. Nevertheless, for the moment in women's chess there is not the male level of universalism.

And, of course, in the winning team there is bound to be a 'star striker'. With a score of 8 out of 9 Nadezhda Kosintseva achieved the best performance of the Olympiad – 2693! However, for Nadezhda such feats are becoming commonplace – at the last Olympiad she scored 8½ out of 10 with a 2650 performance. It is obvious that at the present time Nadezhda is one of the best team players in the world.

It stands to reason that for any other team 2nd place would be an achievement, but I am sure that the Chinese regarded this as a failure. After all, for the 3rd successive Olympiad they have not managed to win, giving rise to parallels with the Russian men's team. The team leader Hou Yifan confirmed her reputation, winning two key games against Kosintseva and Lahno and achieving the 2nd best performance of the tournament.

The bronze medals were won by the Ukrainian team, who, like the first two prize-winners, went through undefeated, and made only one draw more.

Kateryna Lahno, who achieved the 3rd-best performance of the Olympiad, confirmed her class.

DAVID LLADA

**In 'the match of their lives' Kazakhstan, led by Guliskhan Nakhbayeva, held the Chinese top seeds to a draw.**

NEW IN CHESS

**Always in a good mood, Valentina Gunina shares a joke with Alexandra Kosteniuk.**

NOTES BY
Nadezhda Kosintseva

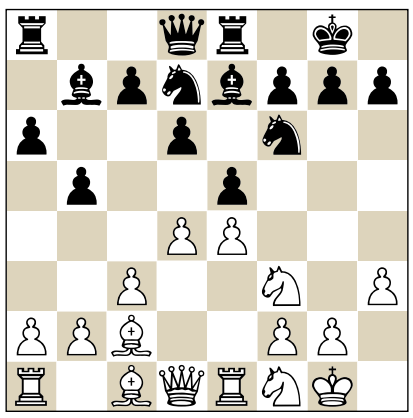
RL 25.14 – C95
**Nadezhda Kosintseva**
**Zhao Xue**
Istanbul 2012 (6)

This game was played in the sixth round, in the match against our eternal rivals in all team competitions, the Chinese team. For us, such matches are always especially crucial, and on this occasion, apart from anything else, it was important to demonstrate, in particular to ourselves, that despite all the objective indicators of the strength of Chinese players, it is still possible to fight against them.

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6**

Something of a surprise. In my preparations for the game I thought it more probable that Zhao Xue would choose the Berlin Defence.

**4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘b8 10.d4 ♘bd7 11.♘bd2 ♗b7 12.♗c2 ♖e8 13.♘f1**

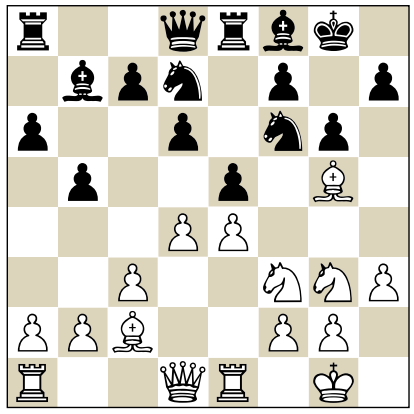


The Breyer Variation chosen by Zhao Xue is also one of my opening passions with black against the Ruy Lopez. Up till now, with the white pieces I have preferred to leave my knight on d2, and I have played several games using the set-up with 13.a4. On this occasion it was decided that I should vary my opening set-up, with the intention of surprising my opponent before she herself did so.

**13...♗f8 14.♘g3 g6 15.♗g5!?**

A rather rare continuation, interesting in its way, the idea of which was shown to me and my sister a year ago by Yury Dokhoian.

White far more often prefers 15.a4 c5 16.d5 c4, or 15.b3 ♗g7 16.d5. The main idea of my move is to develop the pieces, but if possible not to reveal my queenside pawn structure until Black determines it. And then, depending on the opponent's actions, to decide on my pawn strategy.

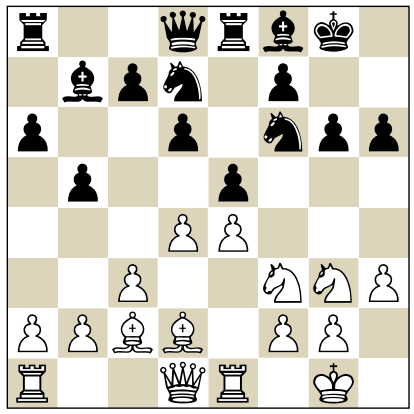


**15...h6**

If Black tries to manage without this move, by playing 15...♗g7, then after 16.♕d2 ♕e7 17.b3!? the white pieces feel very comfortable, whereas Black may become cramped.

**16.♗d2**

Unfortunately, the optimal square e3 is not available to the bishop, since the e4-pawn is hanging. Therefore White has to compromise and retreat the bishop to d2, where it is perhaps somewhat awkwardly placed but with its own ideas.

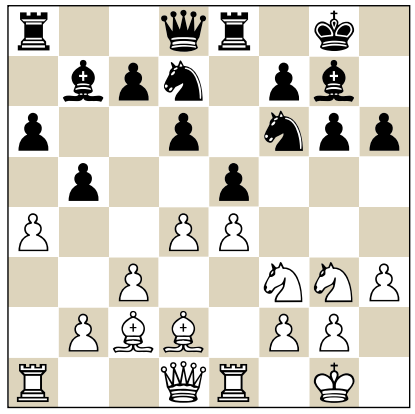


**16...c5?!**

In my view, it would have been more flexible not to succumb to the provocation, and not to determine the queenside structure so immediately. After the move in the game it is obvious that White has achieved strategic gains on the queenside, whereas it will be problematic for Black to initiate counterplay there.

Those not wishing to close the centre completely have tried 16...exd4 17.cxd4 c5 18.d5.

But most often in this position Black has preferred to defer any pawn moves: 16...♗g7 17.a4 and now:

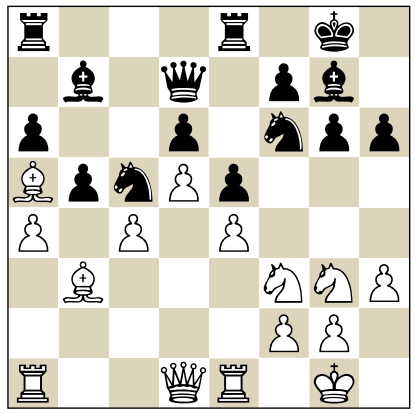


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) after 17...exd4 18.cxd4 c5 19.♗f4 ♘f8 20.d5 White can count on an advantage thanks to the more harmonious placing of his pieces;

B) at the same time, consideration should be given to 17...♘b6!? 18.b3 bxa4 19.bxa4 a5!?;

C) 17...c5 18.d5 c4 19.b4!? cxb3 (White has a very comfortable game after 19...♘h7 20.♗e3 h5 21.♕d2 ♖f8 22.♖a3, Fischer-Spassky, Sveti Stefan/Belgrade m-1 1992) 20.♗xb3 ♘c5 21.c4!? ♕d7 22.♗a5!?,



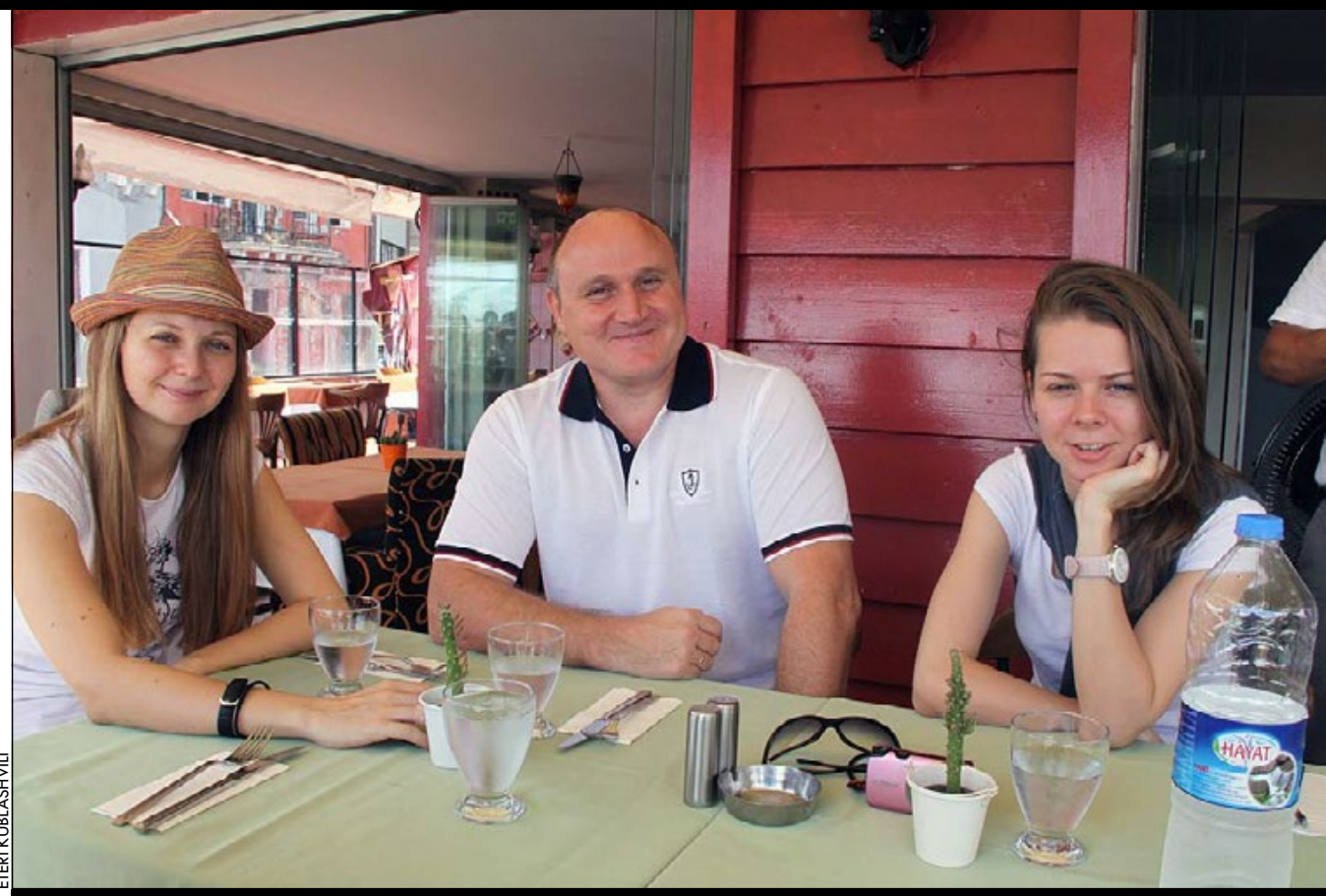
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

vacating the d2-square for the knight. The further plan is ♗c2, ♘f1-e3 and play on the b-file. If White succeeds in this, then despite the future exchange

of pawns and the visual simplification of the position, it may be not so easy for Black to find an effective regrouping of his pieces. After 22...♖ec8 23.♗c2 bxc4 24.♘d2 the bishop on c2 covers its own pawns on a4 and e4, and the knight is ready to pick up the one on c4.

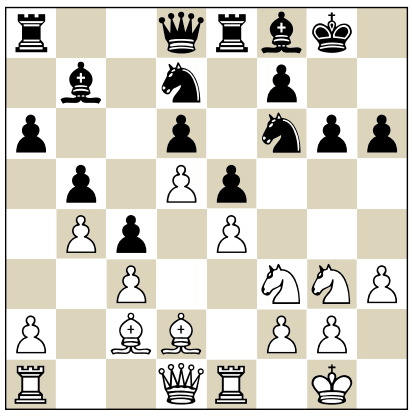
**17.d5 c4 18.b4!**

Exploiting the fact that White has delayed playing a4, and now there is the possibility in the event of ...cxb3 axb3 of obtaining a more compact structure on the queenside. And if Black decides to leave everything as it is, without capturing on b3, then after a4, ♖a3 and the subsequent doubling on the a-file, Black will be altogether passively placed.




ETERI KUBLASHVILI

**These days he is the coach of the Russian men, but on the free day Yuri Dokhoian was happy to join his 'pupils' Nadezhda and Tatiana Kosintseva on a carefree excursion.**

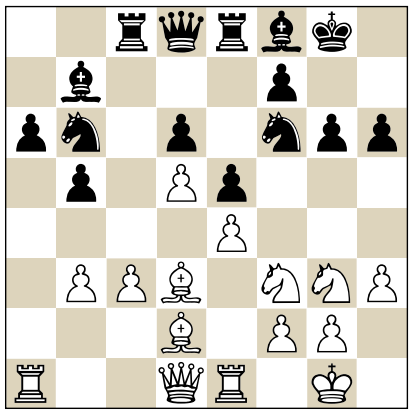


**18...cxb3**

18...a5 is the critical move, but in the given concrete situation White is promised the better game by the frontal confrontation after 19.a4! bxa4 20.b5! ♘c5 21.♕e2 ♘fd7 22.♗e3.

**19.axb3 ♖c8** Preventing c4.

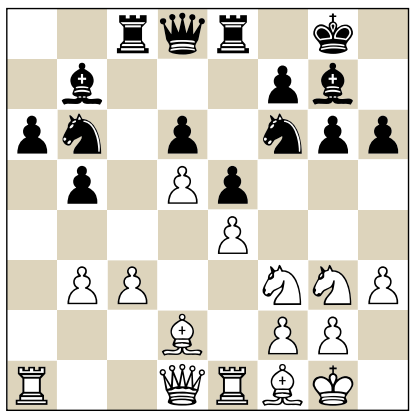
**20.♗d3 ♘b6**



**21.♗f1**

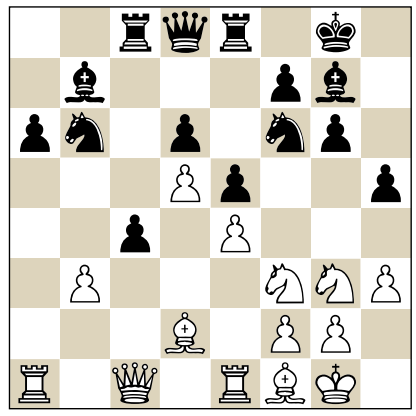
Unless one sees the later idea with the temporary sacrifice of a pawn, this is an unexpected move. Nothing made the bishop go to f1, and this square is more likely to be needed by the knight on g3. Besides, on the basis that White wants to advance c4, aiming for ...bxc4 bxc4, on which diagonal the light-squared bishop should stand becomes even more of a question. And although the immediate 21.♘f1? runs into the standard tactical trick 21...♘bxd5 22.exd5 e4, the simplest was the most direct 21.♕e2 ♘fd7 22.c4 bxc4 23.bxc4 ♘c5 24.♗a5 with an edge.

**21...♗g7**



**22.♕c1?!** A routine decision, which is essentially a loss of time. White could have counted on an advantage with the more concrete 22.c4! bxc4, but here it was necessary to see 23.♗a5 c3 24.♕c2! ♘fd7 25.♘e2, tightly tying down the black pieces.

**22...h5 23.c4 bxc4**



**24.bxc4?**

And this is already a real mistake. It turns out that White has advanced c4, but in doing so she has been left with an ineffective bishop on f1 and has allowed the black pieces to be comfortably deployed in blockading positions.

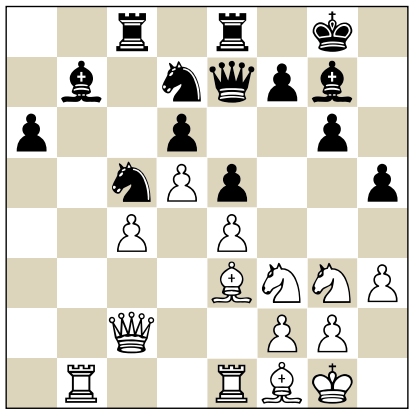
Although it involved a loss of time, 24.♗a5 was still strong and even the less creative 24.♗xc4 ♘fd7 25.♗e3 would have led to a far more unpleasant position for Black after 25...♘c5 26.♕b1.

**24...♘bd7 25.♖b1?!**

With a series of simple decisions, with every move White loses a part of her initiative. She needed to recognize the impending strategic danger and, admitting that her preceding decisions were incorrect, decide on 25.♗d3! ♘c5 26.♗c2, when, despite the time lost, White is still pressing. My further plan would be ♗e3 and

♕d2, or ♕a3, ♖eb1 and ♘e2-c3, with the initiative.

**25...♘c5 26.♗e3 ♘fd7 27.♕c2 ♕e7**

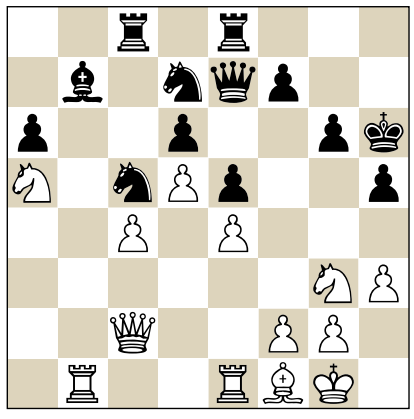


**28.♘d2 ♔h7 29.♘b3 ♗h6 30.♗xh6** The alternative was 30.♘xc5 ♘xc5 31.♗xc5 ♖xc5 32.♘e2 followed by ♘c3-a4 and ♖b6. (The immediate 32.♖b6 did not work because of 32... ♖ec8 33.♖eb1 ♖8c7, preventing the manoeuvre of the white knight.)

**30...♔xh6 31.♘a5?!**

A strategic error. Unfortunately, I did not realize immediately that the knight on a5 was merely an illusion. The knight is firing into thin air, and White should have been fighting not for the c6-point, but for invasion squares on the b-file.

And for this it was necessary to exchange the important blockading knight on c5: 31.♘e2 ♖c7 32.♘ec1 ♗c8 33.♘xc5 ♘xc5 34.♘d3, still with the better chances thanks to the weakness of the black pawns.



**31...♖c7?!**

It is surprising, but for not the first time in this game a decision that at first sight is logical from the standpoint of general considerations proves to be incorrect. It would appear that ...♖c7, preparing to move the bishop from b7 (where it is running up against the d5-pawn) to c8, where it can assist the play with ...f5, cannot be a mistake.

But nevertheless, if one digs deeper, one observes a significant drawback to this decision by Black to give up the b-file. White is not able to exploit it immediately, but everything changes within a couple of moves after the white g3-knight is exchanged for the knight on c5.

Although, unless you are a computer, it is difficult to play 31...♗a8, nevertheless this was the most effective way of emphasizing the incorrectness of White's preceding play. The truth is that the bishop on a8 is no worse than the knight on a5!: 32.♘e2 ♖b8 33.♘c3 ♔g7 34.♘c6 ♖xb1 35.♖xb1 ♕g5 with counterplay.

**32.♘e2 ♕g5 33.♘c3 ♗c8**

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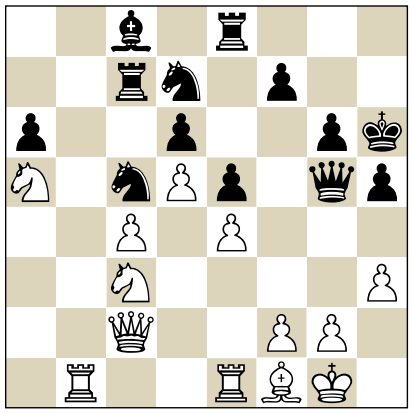


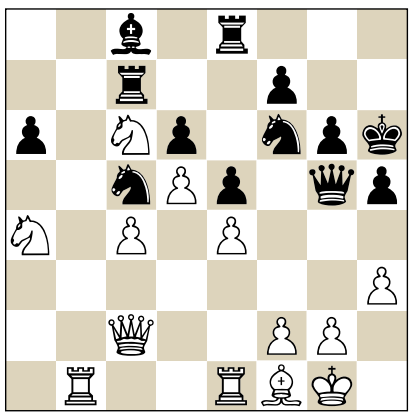
**34.♘c6?!**

A superfluous move. In this game White has already lost an inexcusable amount of time, by being attracted by visually useful moves, which in practice have in fact proved to be harmful. The urgent 34.♘a4 was necessary when after 34...f5, then 35.exf5 ♕xf5 36.♕d2+ ♔g7 37.♘xc5 ♘xc5 38.♖b6 ♕f6 39.♘b3 ♘xb3 40.♖xb3 gives White an edge, while after 34...♘xa4 35.♕xa4 f5 36.exf5 gxf5 37.♘c6 White nevertheless succeeds: 37...♘c5 38.♕a5 ♖g7 39.♘xe5 ♖eg8 40.♘f3 ♕f4 41.♕a3 with a clear advantage.

**34...♘f6?!**

Returning the favour. Black would have had a good game after either the quiet, prophylactic 34...♖b7, and if 35.♘a4?! ♖xb1 36.♖xb1 ♘xa4 37.♕xa4 ♘c5, or the direct 34...f5 35.exf5, on condition that the zwischenzug 35...♘f6! was seen.

**35.♘a4!** At last! There is no time for further delay, and tactics come urgently to White's strategic aid.

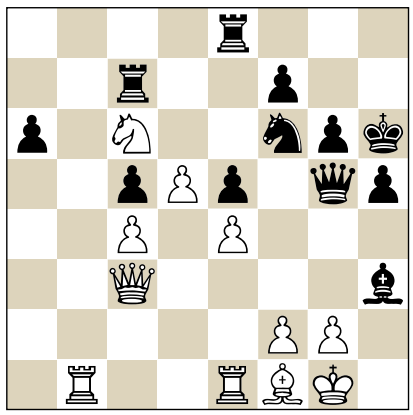


**35...♗xh3** It is easy to calculate the variation 35...♘xa4 36.♕xa4 ♗xh3 37.♕a3 with a double attack on the bishop and the d6-pawn.

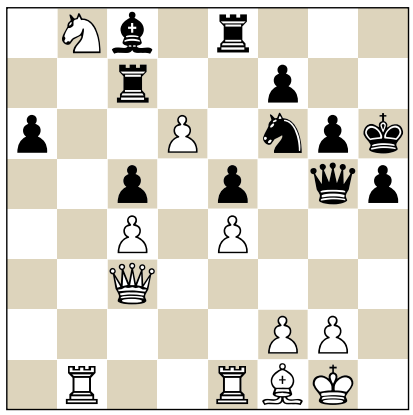
ARMAN KARAKHAYAN

**Unfortunately, we could not trace the name of this devoted chess lady. Can you help us?**

**36.♘xc5 dxc5 37.♕c3**



**37...♗c8?** This oversight is hard to explain. The only move was 37...♗d7 38.♘b8 ♗c8 39.d6 and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

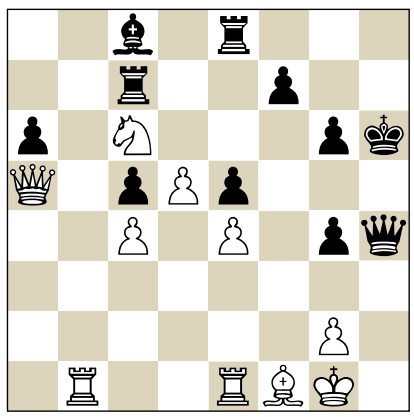
A) Not being a computer, few would decide on 39...♖a7. White's position looks menacing, and in a practical game even the most skilful tactician would hardly be capable of faultlessly reproducing the 'first line', 40.♕a5 ♔g7! 41.♕xc5 ♖b7 42.f3 ♖xb1 43.♖xb1 h4 44.♖d1 ♗g4!, with equality;

B) Black would most probably have preferred the more human 39...♖b7, after which there follows 40.d7! ♖xd7 41.♘xd7 ♘xd7 42.♖bd1, with the exchange for two pawns and some initiative thanks to the somewhat uncoordinated black pieces.

**38.♕a5 ♘g4** Black burns her boats and throws caution to the winds.

**39.f3** The less critical 39.♗e2 ♖b7 40.♕xc5 ♔g7 would also have led to an advantage for White.

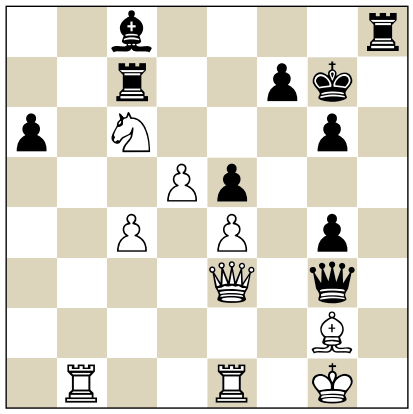
**39...♕h4 40.fxg4 hxg4**



**41.♗e2**

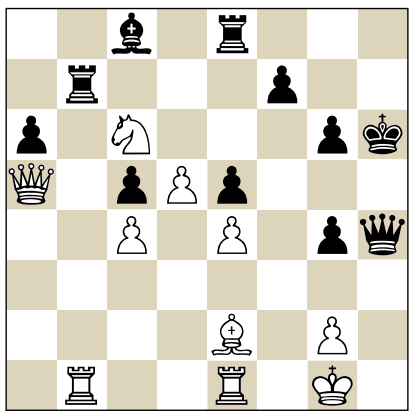
41.♖e3 did not work because of 41...g3 42.♖xg3 ♕xg3 43.♕xc7 ♕e3+ 44.♔h1 ♔g7 and Black wins, and this also applies to the similar 41.♖b3 g3

42.♖xg3 ♕xg3 43.♕xc7 ♕xe1.
I did not want to remove the attack on the c7-rook by 41.♕xc5 ♔g7 42.g3 ♕xg3+ 43.♗g2 ♖h8 although in fact after 44.♕e3 Black's attacking possibilities on the h-file are most probably only theoretical:

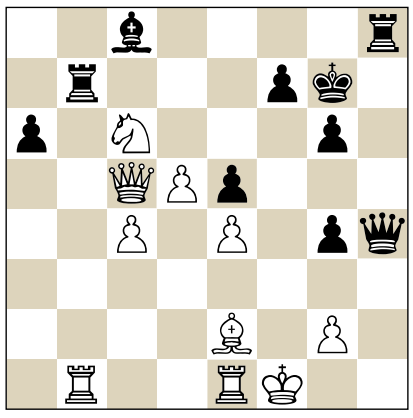


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

44...♕h2+ 45.♔f1 ♗d7 46.♘a5 f5 47.♕g1 ♕f4+ 48.♕f2 and if 48...♕h2 49.d6 and wins.
**41...♖b7** If 41...g3 42.♗f3.

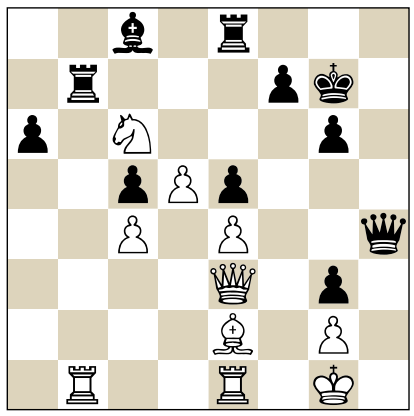


**42.♕c3** The c5-pawn is not so bewitched, and it could well have been captured on the way: 42.♕xc5 ♔g7 43.♔f1 ♖h8 although great accuracy would have been required:

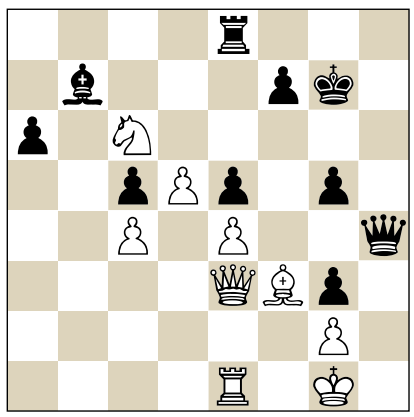


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

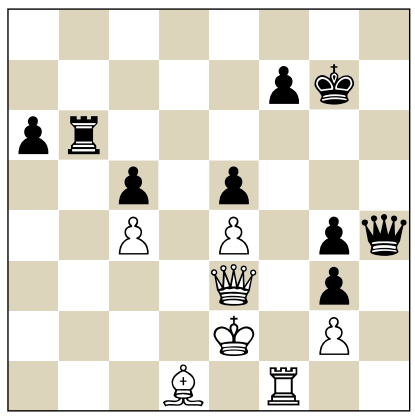
44.♖xb7 ♗xb7 45.♗d1 (making way for the king) 45...♗xc6 46.dxc6 ♕g3 47.♕f2 ♕c3 48.♔g1 g3 49.♕e3 ♕xc4 50.♕xg3 ♕c5+ 51.♕e3 ♕xc6 52.♗b3.
**42...g3**
Otherwise White herself will play this.
**43.♕e3+ ♔g7**



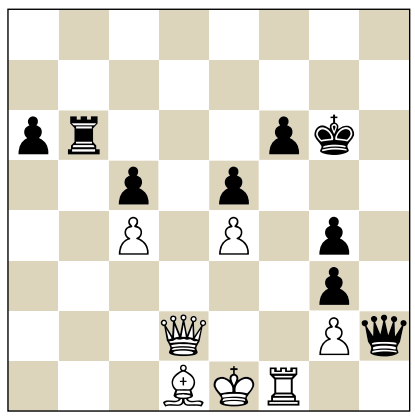
**44.♖xb7?!**
There was no reason at all to hurry with this exchange. 44.♔f1 was better:
A) 44...g5 45.♗d3 ♕g4 46.♖xb7 ♗xb7 47.♖b1 ♖h8 48.♔e1 and wins;
B) 44...♖h8 45.♗f3 and if 45...g5? (45...♖xb1 46.♖xb1 ♗g4 47.♔e2 winning) 46.♖xb7 ♗xb7 47.♘xe5 and wins.
**44...♗xb7**
I think we both overlooked that after the unexpected move 44...♖h8 White would succeed in not squandering her advantage only by finding two 'only' moves: 45.♖xf7+ (the first one, as 45.♔f1?? ♕f4+ 46.♕xf4 ♖h1 is mate) 45...♔xf7 46.♔f1 ♕g5! 47.♗h5 (the second one, as 47.♕g1? runs into 47...♔g7) 47...♖xh5 48.♕xg5 ♖xg5 49.♔e2 with advantage in the endgame, despite being a pawn down.
**45.♗f3 g5**



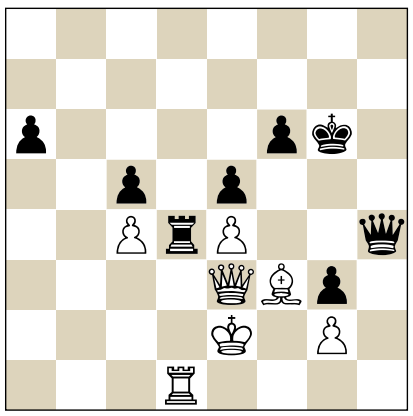
**46.♔f1** My sense of danger and another approaching time-trouble induced me to sacrifice the flexibility of my pawn structure in return for the rapid evacuation of my king from the danger zone.
**46...g4 47.♗d1 ♗xc6 48.dxc6 ♖e6 49.♔e2**
It was not worth being tempted by 49.♕xc5, since after 49...♕h1+ 50.♕g1 ♖f6+ 51.♔e2 ♕h6 52.♖f1 ♖xf1 53.♕xf1 ♕xc6 54.♔e1 ♕c5 it would be very difficult for White to convert her extra piece.
**49...♖xc6 50.♖f1 ♖b6**



**51.♕c3**
Here I had very little time left on my clock, so I endeavoured to play as safely as possible. Meanwhile, nothing terrible awaited White in the event of 51.♕xc5 ♖b2+ 52.♔d3 ♕d8+ 53.♕d5 ♕e7 54.♗c2 ♖b7 55.♕a5 and White wins.
**51...f6 52.♕d2 ♕h2 53.♔e1**
Objectively White is also winning after 53.♕d7+ ♔h6 54.♕xg4 ♕xg2+ 55.♔e1, for example: 55...a5 56.♕h5+ ♔g7 57.♕f3 ♕xf3 58.♖xf3 ♖b4 59.♖xg3+ ♔h6 60.♗e2.
**53...♔g6**



**54.♕e2**
I took Zhao Xue at her word, that the g4-pawn was taboo, but wrongly so. The simple 54.♗xg4 ♖b1+ 55.♗d1 ♕h4 56.♕d5 would have won far more simply.
**54...♔f7 55.♕d2**
And here 55.♕xg4 ♕xg2 56.♕d7+ ♔g6 57.♕f5+ ♔g7 58.♕f3 was more methodical.
**55...♔e7 56.♗xg4 ♖b1+ 57.♗d1 ♕h4 58.♕d3**
Again too cautious. The more confident 58.♕d5! would have led more quickly to the goal.
**58...♖b6**
58...♖b2 would have been parried by 59.♗c2 ♕h2 60.♕f3 ♕h6 61.♔d1 ♖b4 62.♕d3 ♕h2 63.♔c1 ♕xg2 64.♖d1 winning.
**59.♕e3 ♖d6 60.♗f3 ♖d4 61.♔e2 ♔f7 62.♖d1 ♔g6**

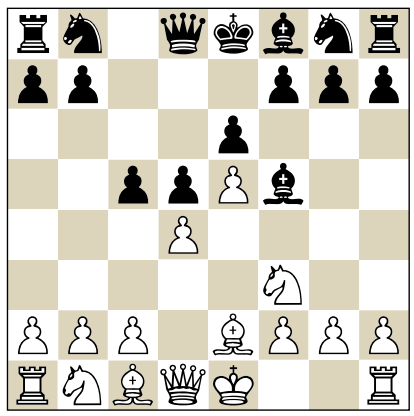


**63.♖xd4?** Accumulated fatigue provoked a desire to simplify the position as soon as possible. However, objectively this is by no means the best decision, creating additional technical difficulties for myself. 63.♕a3 would have won. For example 63...♖xc4 64.♕b3 ♖d4 65.♕g8+ ♔h6 66.♕h8+ ♔g5 67.♕g7+ ♔f4 68.♖f1.
**63...cxd4?**
The decisive mistake. The resistance could have been prolonged by 63...exd4 64.♕a3 ♕f4 65.♔d1.
**64.♕c1 f5 65.♕c2 ♕f4 66.exf5+ ♔f6 67.♕e4 ♕c1 68.♕c6+ ♔g7**
Black is also lost after 68...♔xf5 69.♗e4+ ♔g5 70.♕g6+ ♔h4 71.♕f6+.
**69.♕g6+ ♔f8 70.♕f6+**
And in view of inevitable mate, Black resigned.

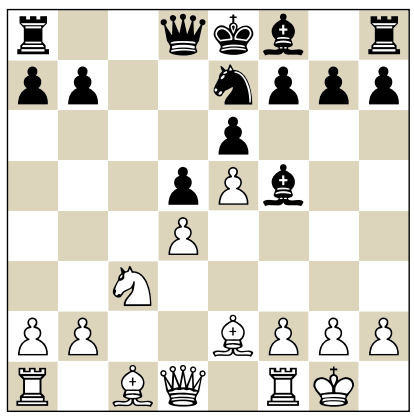
NOTES BY
**Alexandra Kosteniuk**

CK 4.11 – B12
**Alexandra Kosteniuk**
**Swaminthan Soumya**
Istanbul 2012 (9)

I often envy people who can, even years later, describe in detail what they felt during a specific moment. For me it's not quite the same. Even though I'm writing these words only one week after the Chess Olympiad, I cannot really remember so clearly each feeling I had. Sometimes I wish I had a diary to write about my feelings and thoughts during a chess tournament. About all these fleeting moments that fill your day. But nowadays, after an intense chess game and then a tough preparation, you only wish to have some moments of rest, and writing down something else except chess moves seems to be a backbreaking task. So my memories of chess tournaments are mostly chess games that have been played, and by replaying and analysing these games I can recall and feel the tension and pressure of this exact moment of my chess life over and over again.
The 2012 Chess Olympiad was different for me and for my team from the Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk in 2010. In 2010 we marched through the tournament with enviable speed, winning all 11 rounds. The 11-0 winning streak that our team demonstrated in 2010 will not be repeated any time soon. Long before the 2012 Olympiad we knew that this year's tournament would be different. Our constant rivals, the Chinese women, seemed to have been dominating the arena of women's team competitions since 2011, when they convincingly won the World Team Championship. However, despite all the difficulties that we might have foreseen we were determined to do our best. In early 2012, Sergey Rublevsky was appointed as the new captain of the Russian women's team, since Yury Dokhoian, who had played this role since 2007, decided to head the Russian men's team. Thanks to the support of the Russian Chess Federation, both teams – women's and men's – had two coaches to support us, besides the captain.
The game that I want to comment on here is the encounter from the 9th round. After five wins in the starting rounds our team had just made three draws in a row, and this match against India was the decisive one for us if we wanted to continue fighting for gold.
**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2 c5**



This concrete line is very popular nowadays.
**6.c3**
In this game I decided not to start a theoretical discussion after 6.♗e3 – the move that I play more often.
**6...♘c6 7.0-0 cxd4 8.♘xd4!?**
8.cxd4 is more common here, but I had something else in mind.
**8...♘xd4 9.cxd4 ♘e7 10.♘c3**



**10...♘c6**
Soumya's compatriot Vishy Anand opted for another move here, 10...h6,

ETERI KUBLASHVILI

**Alexandra Kosteniuk scored a fine win with an idea in the Caro-Kann that her trainer Alexander Riazantsev had shown her more than a year ago.**

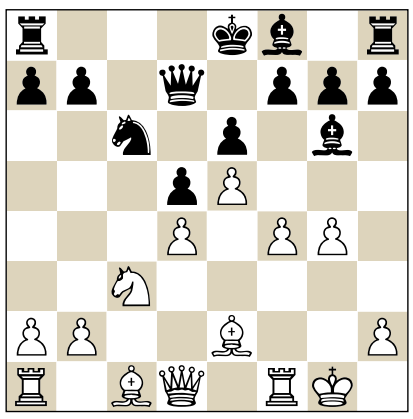
in a game against Magnus Carlsen in the Amber tournament in Nice in 2009. There followed 11.♗b5+ ♘c6 12.♗xc6+ bxc6 13.♗e3 ♗e7 14.♘a4 0-0 15.♖c1 ♕a5 16.♖xc6 ♖ac8 17.♕c1 ♖xc6 18.♕xc6 ♗d3 19.♖c1 ♗b5 20.♕c7 ♕xa4 21.♕xe7 ♕xa2 22.♕b4, and the game ended in a draw after 38 moves.

**11.g4**

11.♗e3 has been played more often.

**11...♗g6 12.f4 ♕d7**

A new move in this position, although quite a logical one. White was threatening to play f5, so Black had to choose a way to protect the bishop. Another option would have been 12...f5!?.

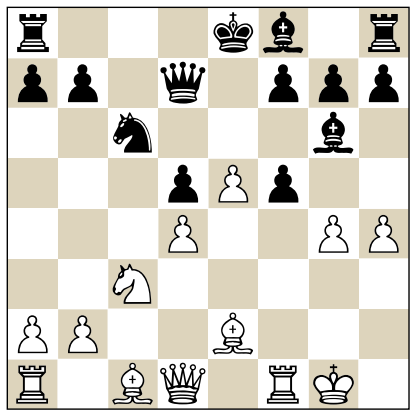


**13.f5!**

Despite everything White continues the march of the f-pawn

**13...exf5 14.h4!**

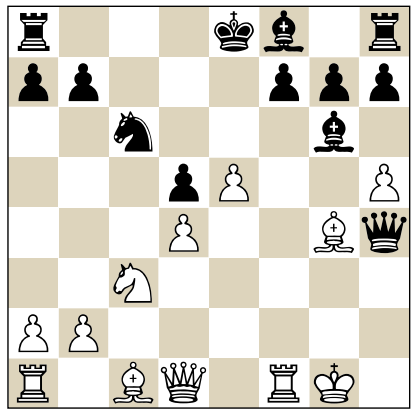
The key idea of this line. My trainer Alexander Riazantsev showed me this idea more than a year ago and now I was finally able to use this novelty in a practical game.



**14...fxg4?**

My opponent spent more than an hour on her opening moves, yet this move can hardly be recommended. Black has to find a way to protect the bishop on g6, so other moves, e.g. 14...f6, 14...h5 or 14...h6 are worth considering.

**15.♗xg4 ♕d8 16.h5 ♕h4**



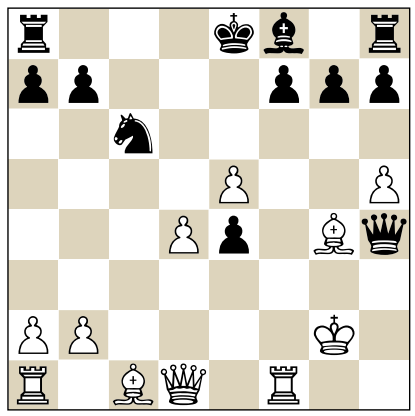
**17.♔g2!**

At moments like this a chess player should be really thankful that chess is not checkers and not taking a piece is quite an alternative.

17.hxg6?? is obviously impossible because of 17...♕g3+ 18.♔h1 hxg6+.

**17...♗e4+ 18.♘xe4 dxe4**

Here is the first crossroads for White in this game. After quite a long think I opted for a quiet move.



**19.♗f4**

During the game I was also attracted by another move, which would have been much stronger here: 19.♖f4!, threatening to play ♗d7+ and not giving Black time to finish her development: 19...♕e7 (19...♕d8 runs into 20.d5! ♘xe5 21.♕a4+ ♔e7 22.♖xe4, and White is just winning) 20.d5 ♘xe5 (in case of 20...♖d8 21.d6 ♕xe5 22.d7+ ♔e7 23.♖f5 Black's king is too

**Russia**

| | | | pts | gms | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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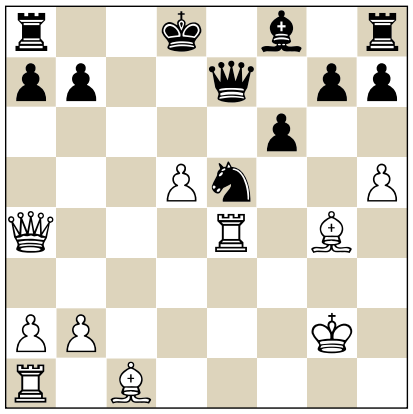
| 2 | Valentina Gunina | 2507 | 6 | 9 | 2449 |
| 3 | Nadezhda Kosintseva | 2524 | 8 | 9 | 2693 |
| 4 | Alexandra Kosteniuk | 2489 | 7 | 9 | 2468 |
| 5 | Natalia Pogonina | 2448 | 6½ | 8 | 2487 |

exposed and there is no way Black can protect it) 21.♕a4+ ♔d8 22.♖xe4 f6



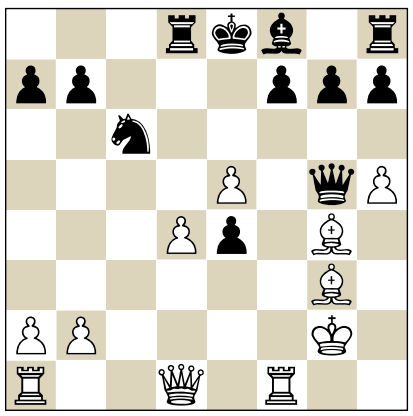
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

23.♖xe5! (the move I had missed in my calculations) 23...fxe5 24.♗g5, and White wins.

**19...♖d8**

Black doesn't have time to finish her development with 19...♗b4 because of 20.d5 ♖d8 21.♖h1 ♕e7 22.d6.

**20.♗g3 ♕g5** After 20...♕e7 21.d5 ♕b4 22.d6 is winning.



**21.♕b3**

21.d5!? was also quite strong: 21...♗e7 (21...♘xe5 22.♖f5; 21...♗c5 22.♖f5 ♕e3 23.♗f2; 21...♗b4 22.♗f4 ♕e7 23.d6) 22.d6, and the threat of trapping the queen with ♗f4 and ♖h1 is too strong: 22...♘xe5 23.♖f5! ♕xg4 24.♖xe5 ♕f3+ 25.♔h3, winning.

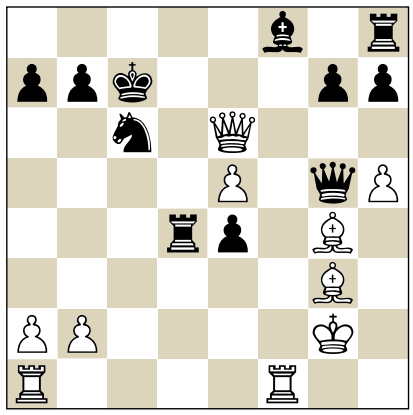
**21...♖xd4**

21...f6 won't help either: 22.♕e6+ ♗e7 23.♖ad1!, and again ♗f4 and ♖h1 is threatening: 23...♘xd4 (23...f5 24.♖xf5 ♕xg4 25.♖f8+) 24.♖xd4 ♖xd4 25.♗f4 ♕h4 26.♖h1.

**22.♕xf7+ ♔d8 23.♕e6**

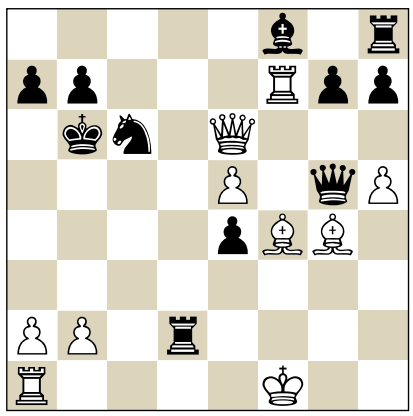
23.♔h3 was also possible, e.g. 23...♘xe5 24.♗xe5 ♕xe5 25.♖ad1.

**23...♔c7**



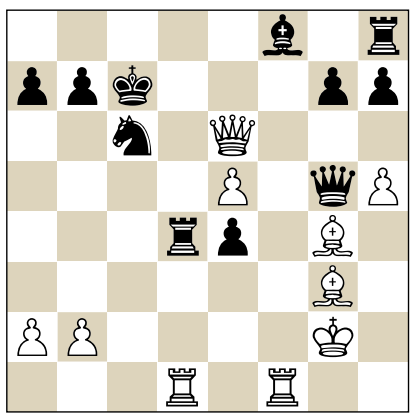
**24.♖ad1**

Here 24.♖f7+! was much stronger. Unfortunately I didn't see that after 24...♔b6 25.♗f4 (25.♗f2? e3) 25...♖d2+ (in a position like this, beautiful variations are everywhere: 25...♕d8 26.♗e3 ♗c5 27.♕b3+ ♘b4 28.♖d7!) I have the strong 26.♔f1!, and here Black is collapsing:



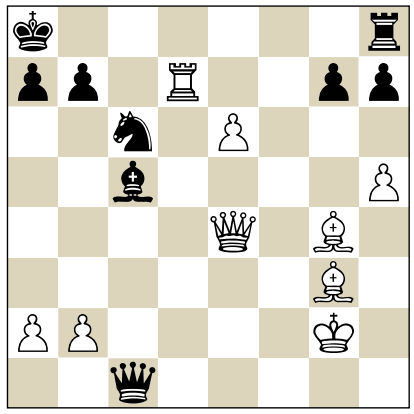
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

26...♕d8 27.♕b3+ ♗b4 28.♗e3+ ♔b5 (28...♔a5 29.a3) 29.♗xd2 ♕xd2 30.♖d1, and White has a better position with a mating attack and a material advantage, almost everything a chess player can dream of.



**24...♗c5?** The decisive mistake. Now the rest is easy.

More tenacious would have been 24...♖xd1 25.♖xd1 ♗c5, and even though White's advantage is still overwhelming, there are still a few precise moves needed in order to win the game: 26.♖d7+ ♔b8 27.♕f5! ♕c1 (after exchanging the queens, the two white bishops and the advanced e-pawn are too strong to hold back: 27...♕xf5 28.♗xf5 e3 29.e6+ ♔a8 30.♗e4 ♖e8 31.♖c7, with the threat of ♖xc6). Black's only hope in this position is White's king, which has suddenly become weaker than its black counterpart: 28.e6+ ♔a8 29.♕xe4. White has a big advantage here, alternating the threat of sacrificing on c6 and the advanced e-pawn. I only needed to be careful about my king.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

For example 29...♖d8 (or 29...♕g1+ 30.♔h3 ♕f1+ 31.♕g2, and there are no more checks. The white king is protected and ♖c7, with the idea of ♖xc6, is coming) 30.♖c7 ♗b6 (30...♖d2+ 31.♗e2) 31.♖f7 ♕xb2+ 32.♔h3, followed by 33.♗f3, threatening 34.♕xc6.

**25.♖f7+ ♔b8**

Also hopeless is 25...♔b6 26.♖xd4 ♗xd4 27.♕b3+ ♔c5 28.♖xb7.

**26.♖xd4 ♗xd4 27.♕d7 ♕d2+ 28.♔h3 ♕xb2 29.♕c7+**

Here 29.e6+ was winning as well, but of course checkmate is a far more secure option.

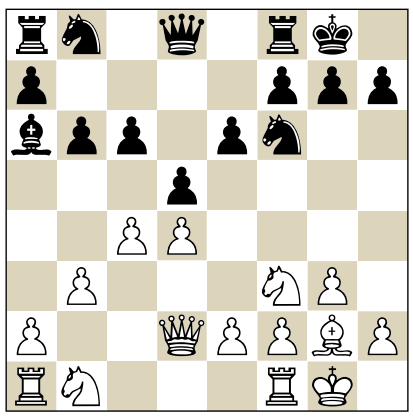
**29...♔a8 30.♗c8**

Black resigned, since after 30...♘d8 31.e6 the diagonal of the bishop on g3 is opened up, creating the deadly threat of ♕b8 mate.

NOTES BY
**Hou Yifan**

QI 16.13 – E15
**Monika Socko**
**Hou Yifan**
Istanbul 2012 (8)

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♗b4+ 5.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2 ♗a6 7.b3 d5 8.♗g2 c6 9.0-0 0-0**



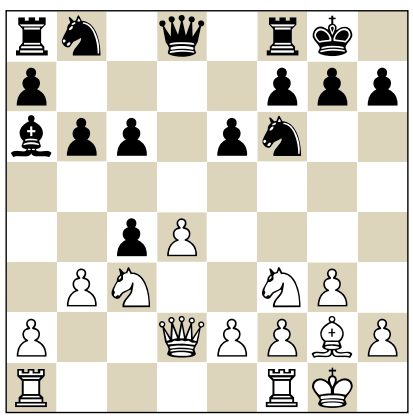
**10.♘c3**

This is a bit rash. Maybe White first needed to protect her c4-pawn, and only then, depending on the situation, to decide whether to develop her knight to c3 and possibly a4, or to a3. Better, therefore, was 10.♖c1, or 10.♘e5 ♘fd7 11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.cxd5 cxd5, with a level position.

**10...dxc4!?**

After a long think I took this aggressive decision! It's an attempt to upset the balance.

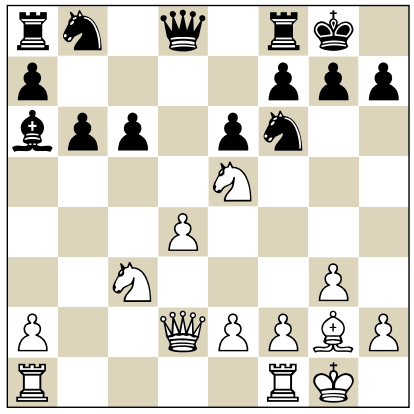
10...♘bd7 looks more 'normal' and solid, but will lead to a position which is quite equal after, for instance, 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.♖fc1 ♖c8.



**11.bxc4**

This is the safest way to take back the pawn, but it gives up any chances to fight for an advantage. Going for a real pawn sacrifice would offer White enough compensation, for example: 11.♘e5!? cxb3 12.axb3 ♗b7 13.♘c4 (after 13.♖fc1 Black has 13...♘d5 followed by ...♘d7) 13...♘bd7 (another possibility is 13...♘a6 14.e4 ♘b4 15.e5 ♘e8!? – an important move: the b4-knight controls the d5-square, so the f6-knight can withdraw to e8 to protect the d6-square) 14.e4 (14.♘d6 ♕b8 15.♘xb7 ♕xb7 16.♖fc1 ♖fd8 is nothing for White, only using the powerful c4-knight to exchange Black's 'bad' b7-bishop) 14...c5 15.♖fd1 cxd4 16.♕xd4 ♘c5 17.♕e3 ♕e7 18.♘d6, and Black will find it difficult to defend. The activity of the white pieces compensates for the pawn. One of the threats now is b4, followed by taking on b7 and then e5.

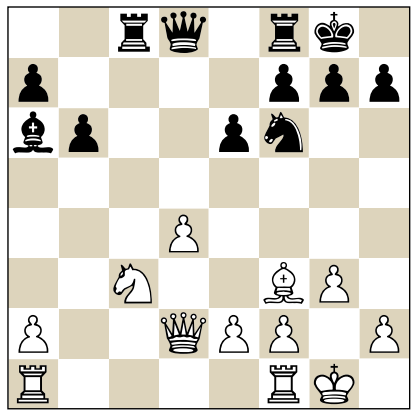
**11...♗xc4 12.♘e5 ♗a6**



**13.♘xc6?!**

I guess that before Monika decided to take the c4-pawn, she already had this series of moves in mind. But maybe here, too, she could have tried to play more aggressively: 13.♖fc1 ♗b7 (13...♘d5 leads to equality after 14.♘xc6 ♘xc6 15.♘xd5 ♘xd4 16.♕xd4 exd5) 14.a4!, planning to follow up with a5, which would be uncomfortable for me. So Black has to play 14...a5, weakening the b6-pawn, which gives White a new target to attack: 15.♖ab1 ♘d5 16.♕b2! ♘b4 17.♘a2 ♘8a6 18.♘xb4 ♘xb4 19.♘d3!?, and White is slightly better.

**13...♘xc6 14.♗xc6 ♖c8 15.♗f3**



**15...e5!**

Another turning point in the game, which once again upsets the balance! After studying the position for a while I understood that although Black has more pieces to control the centre now, White will have no weaknesses for me to attack, and her central pawns will give her a slight initiative if I use precious time to strengthen my position and allow her to develop and reposition her pieces. So the conclusion was that Black should be ready to act at once!

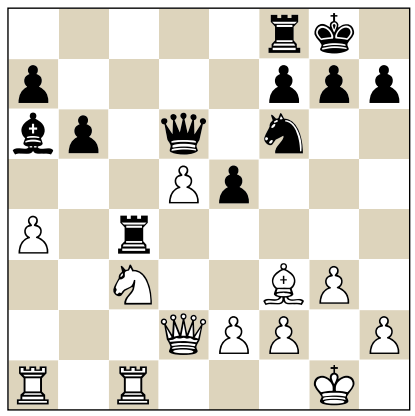
Both 15...♖c4 16.♖fd1 ♕c7 17.♘e4 and 15...♕d6 16.♖ac1 ♖fd8 17.♖fd1 are boring for Black.

**16.d5 ♕d6 17.♖fc1**

Monika's interesting idea is revealed by her next move.

Normally you'd expect 17.♖ac1 ♖c4 18.e3 ♖fc8 19.♖fd1 h6 20.♕b2 e4 21.♗g2, and White can hold the position.

**17...♖c4 18.a4!?**



Highlighting the strength of the rook on a1: White prepares a5 to attack the bishop on a6 and also prepares ♘b5, when after its exchange the a7-pawn will be attacked.

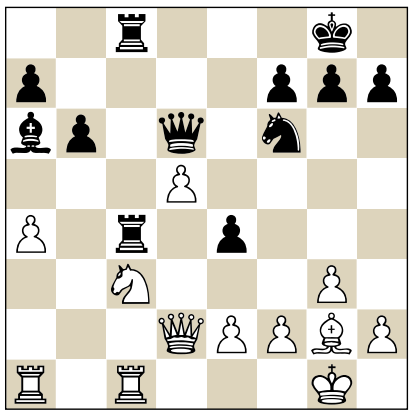
**18...e4**

It was not easy to take a decision here.

Obviously, 18...♖fc8 is nothing for Black after 19.♘b5 ♗xb5 20.axb5. During the game I also thought about 18...♕b4 19.♖c2 (19.♖ab1 ♕a5; 19.a5 b5!) 19...e4 20.♗g2 ♖fc8 21.♘b5 ♘xd5 22.♕xb4 ♘xb4 23.♖xc4 ♖xc4 24.♘xa7, which is almost equal.

**19.♗g2 ♖fc8**

Maybe 19...♕e5 is more accurate, when White has to play 20.e3.



**20.♗h3?!**

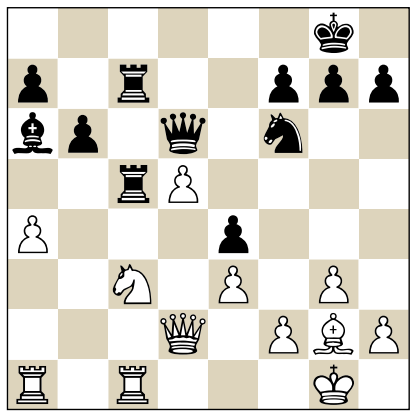
Monika was thinking to force my rook on c8 to a less suitable square, when in some lines d6 might be played with tempo. But I think the main point here is that the bishop on g2 eyes the pawn at e4, so I have to keep my rook on c4.

Better was 20.e3! ♕e5 (20...♘xd5 21.♘xd5 ♖xc1+ 22.♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 23.♕xc1 ♕xd5 24.♗f1, and because of the back rank problem there's no advantage for Black) 21.♗f1 ♖xc3 22.♗xa6 ♖xc1+ 23.♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 24.♕xc1 h5, and although the d5-pawn is a weakness and there are some weak squares on her kingside, her light-squared bishop could defend all of them. The point is that there are only a few pieces left on the board and there is no material advantage for Black, so it would be difficult for me to improve my position.

**20...♖8c7 21.e3 ♖4c5!**

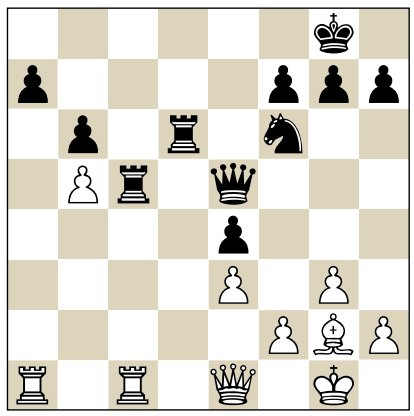
I think this is what Monika had missed! I have this chance precisely because her bishop is on h3.

**22.♗g2**



**22...♕e5?!** Similar to the game was 22...♗d3 23.♘b5 (23.f3 ♕e5 24.f4 ♕d6) 23...♗xb5 24.♖xc5 ♖xc5 25.axb5 ♖xd5 26.♕c2 g5!, but it would save me several tempi!

**23.d6 ♖d7 24.♘b5 ♗xb5 25.axb5 ♖xd6 26.♕e1**



**26...♖xc1?!** We were both getting into time-trouble, so I didn't find the best way to continue. As we see, the b6- and a7-pawns are stopped by the b5-pawn, so it would be better if Black would create a passed c-pawn with 26...♖d7! 27.♖xc5 bxc5.

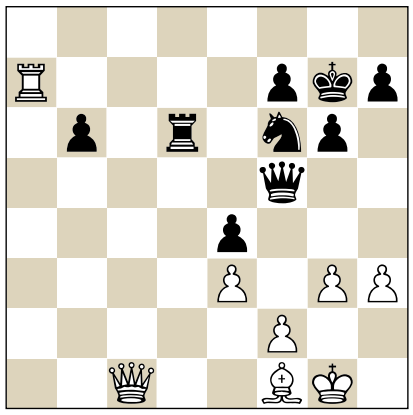
**Worthy of a World Champion. With a 2645 performance Hou Yifan had the best result in the Women's Olympiad.**

NEW IN CHESS

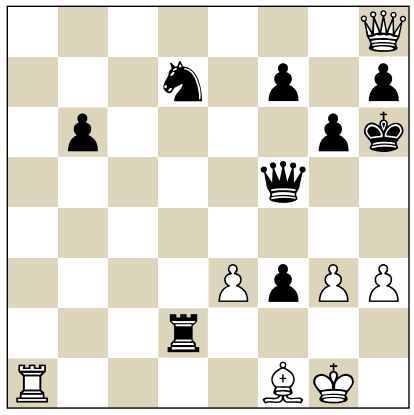
**China**

| | | | pts | gms | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Hou Yifan** | 2599 | 6½ | 9 | **2645** |
| 2 | **Zhao Xue** | 2549 | 8 | 10 | **2574** |
| 3 | **Ju Wenjun** | 2528 | 5½ | 10 | **2351** |
| 4 | **Huang Qian** | 2449 | 8 | 10 | **2547** |
| 5 | **Ding Yixin** | 2424 | 3½ | 5 | **2319** |

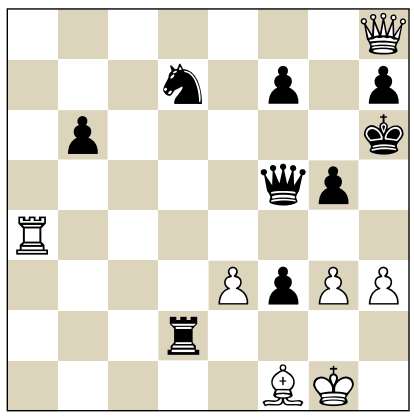
**27.♕xc1 g6?!**
As this makes Black's king more vulnerable, 27...h6 was obviously much safer.
**28.♖xa7 ♕xb5 29.♗f1 ♕f5 30.h3 ♔g7**



**31.♕c7?**
The last key moment in this game! After this mistake there's no chance for White anymore.
She should have tried 31.♕b2 to prevent ...♘d7-e5, when the rook cannot move to f6, and I cannot push my only passed pawn. The only thing White would have to do is wait with moves like ♔h2, ♗c4 etc. After 31...h5 32.♖a6 ♕c5 33.♔h2 it is almost equal.
**31...♖d7! 32.♕b8**
The most tenacious move!
White would lose immediately after 32.♕xb6 ♖d2 33.f4 exf3 34.♕b3 ♘d5.
**32...♖d1!**
And not 32...♖xa7 33.♕xa7 ♕a5 34.♕b7, and the weak pawn on f7 hinders Black's attempts to improve her position.
**33.♖a8 ♘d7 34.♕h8+ ♔h6 35.♖a1 ♖d2 36.f4 exf3**
Now the position looks very clear: I am two pawns up, my king is safer than my opponent's, but...



**37.♖a4!**
This one I had missed! The moment I saw this move with only one minute left, I got nervous, and at one point I even felt I was losing. Then I found my next move.
**37...g5**
Everything is clear again. My king will never be trapped in the corner!

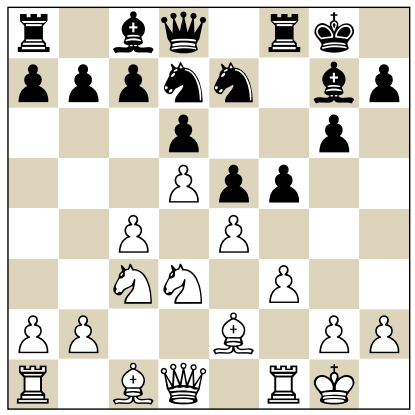


**38.♖c4?** The only move was 38.♖d4, but after 38...♖xd4 39.♕xd4 ♕e6 40.g4 ♘e5 Black is winning.
**38...♖d1**
Now Black is absolutely winning.
**39.♖c6+ f6 40.♔f2 ♖xf1+**
White resigned.

NOTES BY
**Kateryna Lahno**

KI 2.5 – E99
**Kateryna Lahno**
**Monika Socko**
Istanbul 2012 (10)

This game was played in the penultimate round. Both teams eagerly needed to win the match...
**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7**
The King's Indian is Monika's main weapon, and its sharpness and complexity were suitable for both of us that day.
**4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♗e2 e5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7 9.♘e1**
Before this game I had tried the other popular line 9.♘d2 a few times.
**9...♘d7 10.♘d3 f5 11.f3**



**11...♔h8** Avoiding the main theory. After 11...f4 12.♗d2 ♘f6 13.♖c1 g5 14.c5 we would have reached one of the most fashionable lines nowadays.
**12.♗d2 f4 13.♖c1**
Preparing c4-c5.
**13...c5**
A typical way to prevent White's plan.

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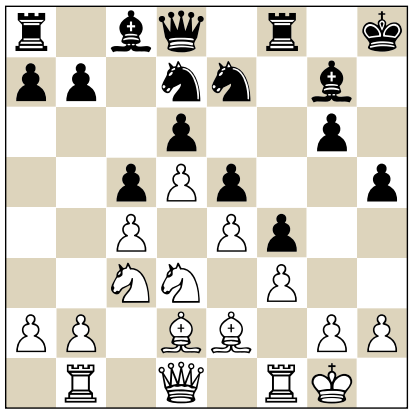
**14.♖b1** There is no more need for the rook on c1, as White cannot break her opponent's queenside structure without b2-b4.

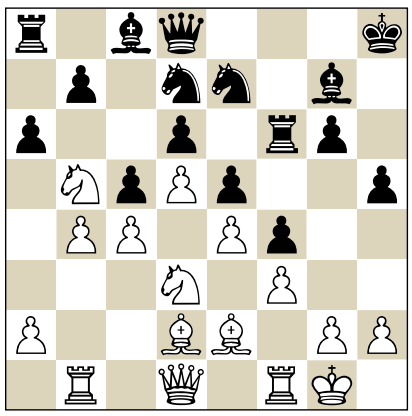
**14...h5** Another typical pawn advance – Black is preparing attacking actions on the kingside.



**15.♘b5!?**

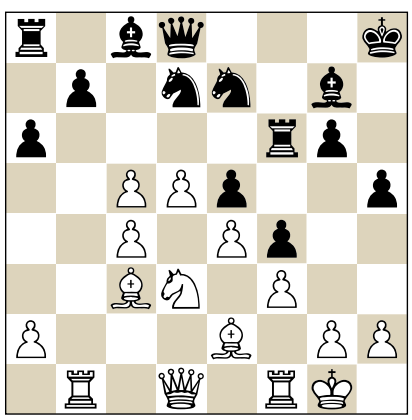
I was also considering 15.b4, which might have actually been the simplest and strongest continuation; but then another idea drew my attention.

**15...♖f6 16.b4 a6**



**17.♘xd6** The point. For the knight White obtains two strong central pawns, which keep Black's army totally immobilized.

**17...♖xd6 18.bxc5 ♖f6 19.♗c3**

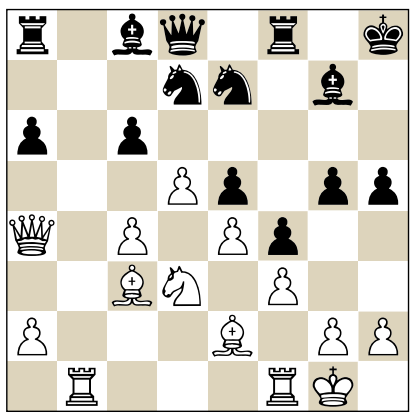


DAVID LLADA

**French GM and journalist Robert Fontaine had every reason to be proud of his wife. With 7/10 Kateryna Lahno contributed heavily to Ukraine's bronze medals.**

**19...♖f8?!** An inaccuracy. Black had a good chance to keep her rook on the sixth rank by playing 19...g5!, which not only delays the advance of White's pawns but also helps Black's kingside actions from square g6. Then the principled 20.♘xe5 ♘xc5 21.♘d3 ♘xd3 22.♗xf6 ♗xf6 23.♕xd3 ♕d6 could have led to a position in which White's material advantage is compensated for by Black's domination of the dark squares...

**20.♕a4 g5** Resuming the kingside actions. **21.c6 bxc6**

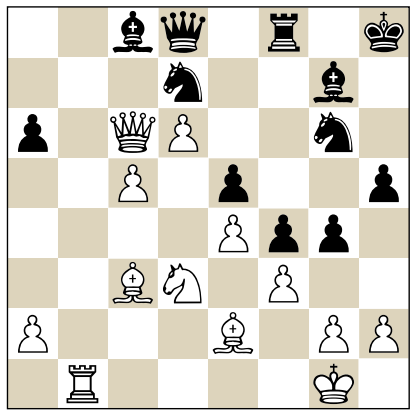


**22.d6** Surely not 22.dxc6? ♘b8, and Black gets rid of White's main trump.

**22...♘g6 23.♕xc6 ♖b8**

If Black plays 23...♖a7 then after 24.c5 g4 25.fxg4 ♕g5 26.gxh5 ♘h4 27.♗f3 ♖g8 28.♘e1 White's king is well protected.

**24.c5 ♖xb1 25.♖xb1 g4**



**26.♕c7!?** At first sight this is just against the basic chess rules! However, Black's kingside attack seemed very dangerous, so I preferred to exchange queens. Perhaps my advantage is now less than it could have been after the computer's 26.♘e1!?, but Black's defence is still not so easy.

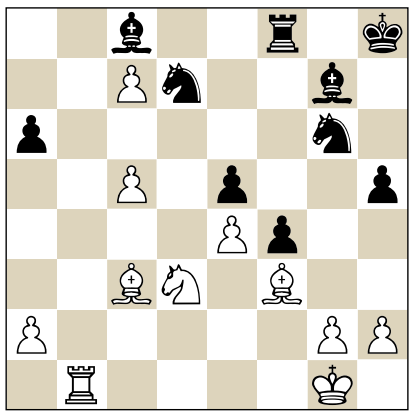
Of course, 26.fxg4? f3! 27.♗xf3 ♕g5 would be too good for Black.

In case of 26.♘e1!? a direct attack wouldn't work: 26...g3 (or 26...♕g5 27.♕c7 threatening c6) 27.h3 ♕h4, as here White has 28.♗xa6, and it's well-known that Black never mates

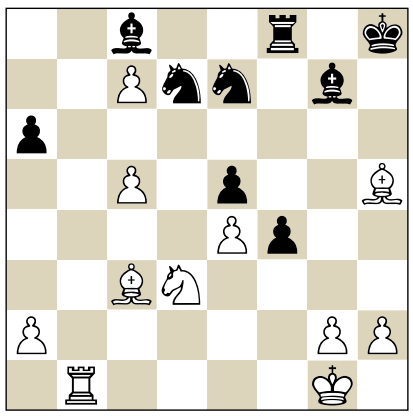
**Ukraine**

| | | | pts | gms | TPR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Kateryna Lahno** | 2542 | 7 | 10 | **2608** |
| 2 | **Mariya Muzychuk** | 2466 | 6 | 9 | **2526** |
| 3 | **Natalia Zhukova** | 2442 | 6½ | 9 | **2480** |
| 4 | **Anna Ushenina** | 2433 | 7 | 10 | **2460** |
| 5 | **Inna Yanovska** | 2404 | 4 | 6 | **2337** |

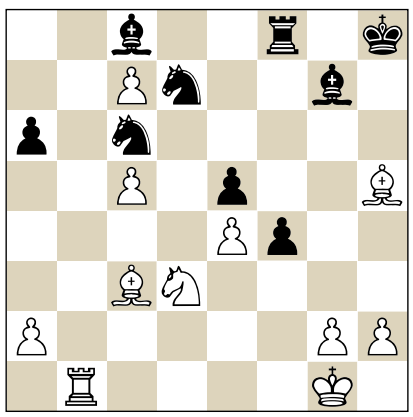
without his light-squared bishop.
**26...♕xc7** Forced.
**27.dxc7 gxf3 28.♗xf3**



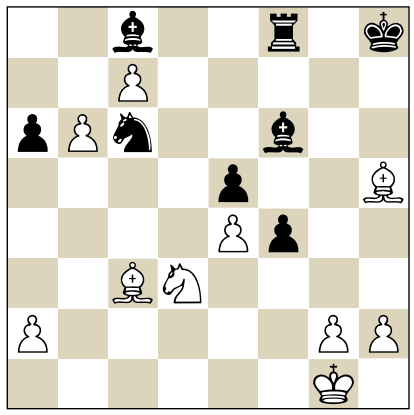
**28...♘e7** Necessary again, as Black has to stop the advance of the other c-pawn. For example, after 28...h4? 29.c6 ♘f6 30.♖b8 Black wouldn't survive.
**29.♗xh5**
The material is roughly equal now, but White is keeping the initiative.



**29...♘c6?**
Missing excellent drawing chances after the correct 29...♘f6! 30.♗f3 ♘e8 31.♗a5 ♘c6 32.♖b8! ♘xc7! 33.♗xc7 ♘xb8 34.♗xb8 ♖d8, and so on.

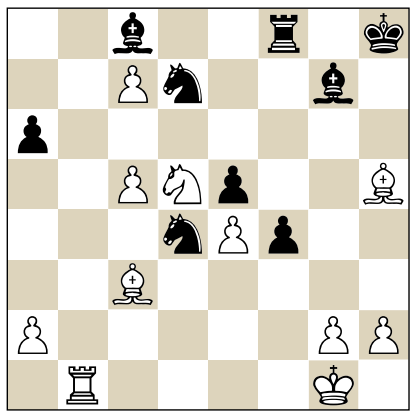


**30.♘b4** Shifting the knight to the strong d5-square.
Home analysis shows that White has probably missed the way to get a decisive advantage, but the following series of unexpected and beautiful moves was impossible to find, calculate and give proper assessment under time-pressure. Just enjoy: 30.♖b6! ♘xb6 31.cxb6 (intending to play ♘d3-c5) 31...♗f6

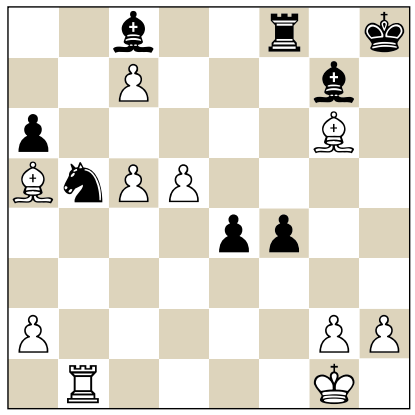


ANALYIS DIAGRAM

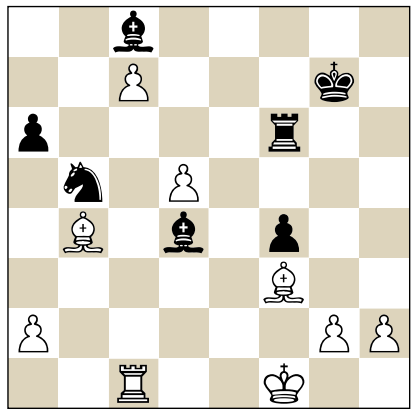
32.♗d1!!, and the computer tells us that transferring the bishop to the queenside clears the path for White's formidable passers. For example, 32...♘e7 (32...♗g5 33.♔f2!?) 33.♗g4!? (33.h3!?) 33...♗xg4 34.b7 ♘c6 35.♗xe5!. Now White still has to do some good work, but it seems that after something like 35...♗g7 36.h3!? ♗d7 37.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 38.♘e5! ♘xe5 39.b8♕ ♗c8 40.♕b2 ♔f6 41.♕d4 ♖e8 42.h4 Black would be unable to cope with the problems.
**30...♘d4 31.♘d5**



**31...♘b5** The best defence. The attempt to exchange the strong knight with 31...♘f6? fails to 32.♗xd4 ♘xh5 (or 32...exd4 33.♘e7 ♘xh5 34.♘xc8 d3 35.♘d6) 33.♘e7 exd4 34.♘xc8, and White wins.
**32.♗a5**
Giving more support to the main trump.
**32...♘f6** The c5-pawn was untouchable: 32...♘xc5?! 33.♗b4.
**33.♗g6 ♘xd5 34.exd5 e4**
Once again Monika finds the best way to fight, getting her dark-squared bishop into the game.

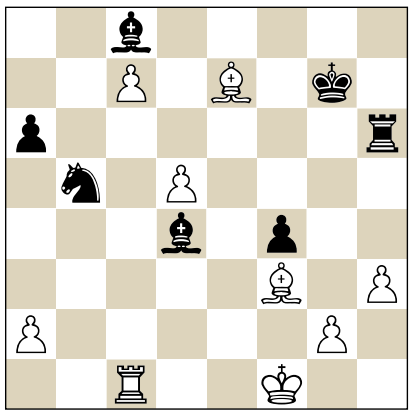


**35.♗xe4?!**
Unnecessarily giving Black chances.
It was better to keep the c5-pawn alive: 35.♔f1! ♗d4 36.a4 ♘a3 37.♖c1! (or 37.♖b8!? ♗xc5 38.♖xc8 ♖xc8 39.♗f5 followed by c7-c8♕), and if 37...♗b2 then even 38.d6! ♗xc1 39.c6 ♘c4 40.d7, and the new queen will more than compensate for White's sacrifices.
**35...♗d4+ 36.♔f1 ♗xc5 37.♖c1 ♗d4?!** Time-trouble causes mistakes. It was necessary to block the a-pawn with 37...♗a3!.
**38.♗b4 ♖f6 39.♗f3 ♔g7**

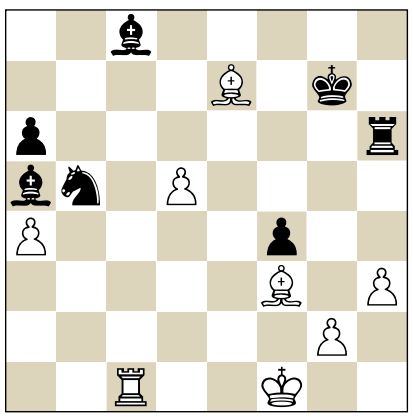


**40.♗e7?** The last move before the time-control throws away White's advantage. Correct was 40.a4! ♘d6 41.♖e1! (this is what I failed to find) 41...♔f7 (41...♗e3 cannot prevent White's rook invasion due to 42.♗c3) 42.♗h5+, and so on.
**40...♖h6**

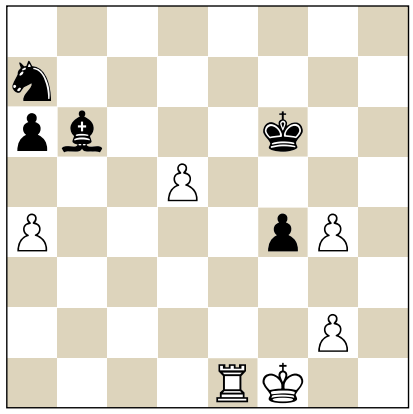
Now White loses a vital tempo.
**41.h3**



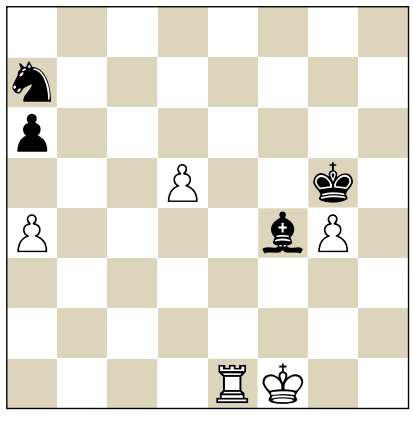
**41...♗e5** It turns out that Black has managed to get rid of the c7-pawn, but there are still some tricks...
During the game I was worried about 41...♗e3, but home analysis proved that White still keeps the advantage: 42.♖d1 ♘d4 43.d6! a5. The threat ...♗c8-a6 looked very dangerous to me, but the cool 44.♖d3! ♗a6 45.♗e4 clarifies the situation.
**42.♖e1! ♗xc7 43.a4 ♗a5**
After 43...♘d6 44.♖c1 ♘e8 45.d6 White wins the piece back.
**44.♖c1**



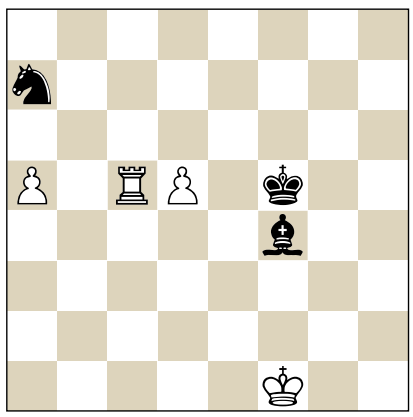
**44...♘a7?** A panicky move due to the high tension and the tiredness.
Black loses a piece after 44...♘c3? 45.♗c5, followed by ♗d4; but the very first move of the light-squared bishop could have forced a draw: 44...♗xh3! 45.axb5 (or 45.gxh3 ♖xh3 46.♗g2 ♖c3) 45...♗d7 46.g3 ♗xb5+ 47.♔g2 fxg3, and so on.
**45.♗c5 ♖b6**
Or 45...♗b6 46.♗xb6 ♖xb6 47.♖c7+.
**46.♗xb6 ♗xb6 47.♗g4!**
Simplest.
**47...♗xg4 48.hxg4 ♔f6 49.♖e1**



**49...♗e3** Black's poor knight couldn't join the fray: 49...♘c8? 50.♖e6+ ♔g5 51.♖c6 winning.
**50.g3 ♔g5 51.gxf4+ ♗xf4**



**52.♖e6?**
A first step in the wrong direction.
I wanted to cut off the knight, but the obvious 52.♖e8! somehow eluded me: 52...♔xg4 53.♖a8 ♗e3 54.♔e2 ♗c5 55.d6 ♘c6 56.d7, with an easy win.
**52...a5 53.♖a6 ♘c8 54.♖xa5 ♔xg4 55.♖c5 ♘a7 56.a5**
56.♔e2 was simpler: 56...♔f5 57.d6+ ♔e6 58.♖c7 ♔xd6 59.♖xa7, with a theoretical win.
**56...♔f5**



**57.♔e2??** White had no time to bring the king into play – I could still have won by playing 57.d6+! ♔e6 (or 57...♔f6 58.♖d5 ♘c6 59.a6 ♔e6 60.d7 ♔xd5 61.a7 ♔d6 62.a8♕ ♔xd7 63.♔e2 and this is not a fortress) 58.♖c7 ♘b5 59.a6! ♔xd6 60.♖b7 ♔c6 61.♖xb5, and so on.
**57...♗d6** Now Black's king takes care of the d5-pawn. The draw is inevitable.
**58.♖c6 ♘xc6** Draw.
Well, I was not very disappointed with the result. We won the match anyway! ■

**Istanbul 2012 (women)**

| | | Pts | Tb1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Russia | 19 | 450.0 |
| 2 | China | 19 | 416.0 |
| 3 | Ukraine | 18 | 408.5 |
| 4 | India | 17 | 336.0 |
| 5 | Romania | 16 | 313.5 |
| 6 | Armenia | 16 | 313.0 |
| 7 | France | 15 | 347.5 |
| 8 | Georgia | 15 | 344.0 |
| 9 | Iran | 15 | 339.0 |
| 10 | USA | 15 | 326.0 |
| 11 | Germany | 15 | 316.0 |
| 12 | Kazakhstan | 15 | 309.0 |
| 13 | Mongolia | 15 | 308.0 |
| 14 | Belarus | 15 | 292.0 |
| 15 | Poland | 14 | 336.5 |
| 16 | Bulgaria | 14 | 316.5 |
| 17 | Hungary | 14 | 303.0 |
| 18 | Latvia | 14 | 296.5 |
| 19 | Cuba | 14 | 286.0 |
| 20 | Netherlands | 14 | 285.5 |
| 21 | Uzbekistan | 14 | 278.5 |
| 22 | Slovakia | 14 | 278.0 |
| 23 | Peru | 14 | 273.5 |
| 24 | Indonesia | 14 | 262.5 |
| 25 | Mexico | 14 | 230.0 |
| 26 | Vietnam | 13 | 307.5 |
| 27 | Czech Republic | 13 | 306.5 |
| 28 | Azerbaijan | 13 | 306.0 |
| 29 | Israel | 13 | 302.0 |
| 30 | Serbia | 13 | 290.5 |
| 31 | Colombia | 13 | 289.5 |
| 32 | Spain | 13 | 285.0 |
| 33 | Italy | 13 | 277.0 |
| 34 | Venezuela | 13 | 262.5 |
| 35 | Montenegro | 13 | 259.0 |
| 36 | Estonia | 13 | 243.5 |
| 37 | Austria | 13 | 230.0 |
| 38 | Chile | 13 | 200.5 |
| 39 | Bolivia | 13 | 182.0 |
| 40 | Greece | 12 | 276.0 |

127 teams, 11 rounds

Short Stories

# Body and mind games

Olympiads are all about sex. No, I take that back – there is a little bit of chess thrown in as well, but, in essence, the event is the largest, most exotic social gathering on the calendar. Surprisingly, it took FIDE nearly half a century to understand this, for it was not until Haifa 1976 that the women's Olympiad began to be held regularly alongside the men's (or 'open', to be terminologically exact). While this was indeed a seminal moment in the history of modern Olympiads, the revolution was just beginning. Initially, women's matches were held over only three boards (and prior to 1976 it had been just two!) plus one reserve. This odd compromise figure made little sense from a sporting point of view as key matches were played with one side having a preponderance of whites. However, it was based on the correct assumption that not all federations would bother with the trouble and expense of sending representatives of the fairer sex. Buenos Aires 1978, for example, had 66 male and just 32 female teams. As the men's event was played over four boards, with two reserves, the combination of these two factors ensured that the ladies remained, for some years at least, a relatively scarce commodity.

It took an organizational genius like Florencio Campomanes to realise that, for Olympiads to go with a bang, something needed to be done to address this numerical disparity. All Olympiads have their volunteers, but Manila 1992 was unsurpassed in the sheer volume of totty. There were literally hundreds of smiling and invariably polite eighteen to twenty-something-year-old Philippina hostesses. Not a few liaisons were struck up during the course of two weeks. Joel Benjamin related to me, in a mixture of admiration and mirth, the story of a silver-haired colleague demolishing his last-round opponent before smilingly walking away hand-in-hand with his tournament amour. Ivan Sokolov went further in actually marrying a girl he met at that event – and he was not the only one. Therefore it comes as no surprise that Manila 1992 is considered to have been one of the best Olympiads in recent decades and that is despite (or perhaps because of) the playing hall being frequently plunged into darkness due to 'brown-outs'.

Not all relationships were with hostesses. One day, a well-known player came up to me grinning widely – 'Nigel, you really ought to tell your team to behave!'

'What's wrong?' I asked.

'I was in my room last night, at about 1 a.m., all ready to sleep, and suddenly there was this banging on my door. I got up to open it, and there stood … asking whether she could come in.'

'What did you do?' I naively inquired.

'Well – I fucked her, of course!'

Notwithstanding the above, English women are no more lascivious than average. Besides, a bit of relaxation is, on balance, a very good thing. Over the years though, we have had one or two interesting characters who perhaps have strayed a touch too far into the region of unprofessionalism – from the national champion whose idea of 'preparation' was endlessly fretting about which clothes to wear, to the teenager who would join me for breakfast, before going straight to bed after her night on the town...

A vital moment in the evolution of Olympiads occurred in Valetta 1980 – for it was in Malta that the inaugural Bermuda Party was held, in a stairwell. With the exception of Elista 1998, when Bermuda did not send a team, those wealthy amateurs from Britain's most populous remaining overseas territory, have organised a bash every two years. From such humble beginnings, it has become *the* social event to attend. Almost every player goes – except the Chinese – although you may still see the odd individualist, like Wang Hao, chatting, dancing and downing the drinks. Even the Iranian women have sometimes been known to appear furtively, literally climbing over fences to escape from their government minders, to snatch an hour or two of freedom. By tradition, the party takes place before the free day, so that everybody can get hammered. It is usually a very

good-natured affair but, with alcohol, there have , of course, sometimes been incidents – most infamously when a morose, jealous and inebriated Danny Gormally punched Levon Aronian in Turin, 2006.

Dubai 1986 was arguably the best of the 15 Olympiads I have attended as a player. It began with a lavish firework display and – with its excellent accommodation and playing venue – did not disappoint thereafter. I spent most of my evenings in our hotel nightclub that catered exclusively to the participants. I strongly suspect that Campomanes, who was standing for re-election as FIDE President, had suggested this brilliant idea to the organisers. It was certainly very popular. I recall skinny-dipping in the Gulf with a blonde beauty at the end of one such evening. Unfortunately it was so dark that it took me several anxious minutes to find my clothes. We had only just finished dressing when an armoured vehicle rolled along the beach with jeering soldiers. Thankfully that was the end of the matter, although other people have been arrested in the UAE for less…

Moscow 1994 provided an altogether different, sleazy sort of ambience. The giant 'Cosmos' purported to be a hotel, but in reality was the biggest brothel I have ever seen in my life. The working-girls, numbering well into three figures, would think nothing of phoning your room or knocking on your door to offer their services. Even if one wanted to, there was no escaping them because the weather was so damned cold one didn't really wish to venture outside more than a few steps. Not a few of those who did were mugged. One player, escaping the pain of a recently failed marriage, initially found solace in the dodgy basement nightclub. That was OK, except it was very expensive. He soon discovered that the girls at the Carlsberg bar on the ground floor were somewhat cheaper. A different, less fancy bar further from the lobby, proved more economical still. By the end of the tournament his funds were depleted to the point where he had moved on to seducing the babushkas on his floor. Incidentally, this fine fellow scored outstandingly well in the 'A' tournament…

'Turning into the room I was amazed to find not only another girl still in bed, but two other guys as well. Judging by the disarray of the sheets, it was pretty obvious how the night had been spent.'

Some teams are, by their nature, fun-loving and easy-going. I recall visiting a girl one morning at the 2004 Calvia Olympiad. The door was answered by her room-mate clad only in a towel. My similarly-attired friend came quickly to the door and I was warmly welcomed in by the pair of them. I had actually only popped around for a chat, but so far, so promising, I thought. Turning into the room I was amazed to find not only another girl still in bed, but two other guys as well – both of whom I knew. Judging by the disarray of the sheets, it was pretty obvious how the night had been spent. By pure coincidence, I learned about a year later, from an entirely separate source, that one of these chaps had contracted an uncomfortable and embarrassing disease there (there are very few secrets in the chess world. I could even tell you who acquired a 'dripper' in Manila 1975). Had he been aware of the World Health Organization statistics on HIV/AIDS for this particular country, he would have considered himself very fortunate to have escaped so lightly.

Many idiotic reforms were introduced at the 2008 Dresden Olympiad, such as zero tolerance – despite the fact some teams were staying as much as an hour away by public transport. And how can you possibly think of deciding a relatively short tournament on match points when there are so many teams? It is obvious that, apart from the very top and very bottom, there are going to be a huge number of teams on every score, with the places decided by the vagaries of the tie-break system. But I was forgetting myself for a moment: Olympiads are about sex. Amidst the inanities of accelerated pairings (subsequently scrapped, thank God) and other such rubbish, one brilliant innovation stood out – the number of players in both men's and women's was finally equalized to four plus one. This means that even if Olympiads are held in such profoundly depressing places as an industrial park next to an airport – as the most recent one was – at least the players will be able to provide their own entertainment. Let's face it, most of the participants are not going to end up on the podium so these things are important – especially when you are forgoing a fortnight's holiday and, in many cases, even your own money to attend.

Thus ends my little snippet into the private lives of chess players. When my doctor informs me I have only six months to live, I shall pen a far juicier and more extensive account, names included, without any fear of repercussions. Order your copy now ☺.

Kagan Aydincelebi is warming up for 2023.

Top boards in the A Team: Dragan Solak and Alex Ipatov.

# Too early to harvest

Over the past years no country has seen anything that comes even close to the chess boom in Turkey. The figures are baffling. From a modest membership of 3,500 in 2000 the Turkish Chess Federation has explosively grown to more than 200,000 members in little more than a decade. Scholastic chess is huge. Last year more than two million(!) pupils chose the chess course that was included (optionally) in the curriculum in 2005. Understandably, the performances of the Turkish teams on their home-turf were anxiously and eagerly awaited. A bit prematurely, as it turned out. The Istanbul Olympiad was not yet the moment to harvest. Still, **Efstratios Grivas**, the coach of the Turkish national team, is not alone in his hope and expectation that Turkey will shine at the Tromsø Olympiad two years from now.

Dragan Solak, Alex Ipatov, Baris Esen and Mustafa Yilmaz.

Eight-year-olds Isik Can and Ahmet Utku Üzümcü.

Until 1922 the Grivas family was peacefully living in one of the seven Bosporus islands in Istanbul. Unfortunately, the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-21, which in Turkey is known as the Western Front of the Turkish War of Independence, forced my family to escape to Greece, while my great-grandfather was brutally killed. When I was growing up I was taught that Turkey is our enemy. Ghosts of the past were haunting my grandmother's mind and left their traces in her behaviour. Although I was trying to keep a cool head, I could not fail to be affected by the negative image of Turkey surrounding me.

When I embarked on my chess career, I met several Turkish players, who nearly all of them looked quite natural and normal to me. Fine persons to have fun and a good time with! Nothing like the stories I had been fed, but then perhaps they might be exceptions. Filled with doubts, I was wondering what was the real truth, as the prejudices I knew could be found all over Greece, and as far as I knew similar feelings about the Greek were predominant in Turkey...

In March 2006 I received a phone call from the President of the Turkish Chess Federation (TSF), Ali Nihat Yazici, who had a most interesting proposal. Following the advice of my then good friend grandmaster Suat Atalik, he invited me to be the trainer and second of three young Turkish players during the 2006 European Championship in Kusadasi, the popular seaside resort on the Turkish west coast. Apparently the cooperation during those 15 days was fruitful, as some weeks later the TSF offered me the position of head coach of the Turkish national men's team. I was a bit perplexed, as in case I accepted I would be the first Greek trainer of a national Turkish team in history. And keep in mind that there was never a Turkish trainer of any Greek national team! What a challenge, I thought! Returning to the land where my predecessors were born... With the mission of helping Turkish chess to improve in a capacity that never before a Greek (or a Turkish trainer, for that matter) had been in before! It took me very little time to accept the offer. I resigned from my position in the Greek Chess Federation and in June 2006 I started my work. Each month I would visit Turkey for five to seven days, for training camps or to captain the men's or junior teams during important events.

Kemal Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey, in the playing hall.

Around that the same time the TSF decided to have a trainer for the national women's team and enlisted Adrian Mikhalchishin. Then, in 2009, to complete the picture, Mikhail Gurevich became the trainer for the national junior team. From then on, these youngsters could train with both me and Gurevich.

All the time the TSF was very helpful, providing any possible support that could ease or improve our work. For instance, there would always be a team manager taking care of every small detail. What's more, there were continuous meetings to discuss the next steps that should be taken to develop Turkish top chess. Our proposals were always taken into account, as the head trainers were expected to have a much

wider mission than only training the players.

When I started my work, there were two GMs in Turkey, Suat Atalik and Mikhail Gurevich, and a handful of young IMs, generally rated around 2400. Soon many more joined us and this also resulted in the first successes. At World and European Youth Championships many medals were won, international master and grandmaster titles were claimed, and the qualification to the FIDE World Cup by Baris Esen and Alexander Ipatov were further results of the new course of the TSF. For six years I regularly lived together with these boys, sharing their adolescent angst and advising them as well as I could. In those six years I learned that there are no 'Greeks' or 'Turks', just good or bad people. I think that in Turkey I found my own 'Gens Una Sumus'.

NEW IN CHESS

**The captain and me. Efstratios Grivas watches Emre Can.**

In a way, the 2012 Olympiad in Istanbul was supposed to 'crown' the work of the last six years in Turkish top chess. Or at least the performance of the Turkish teams should be a milestone on a long and promising road. The omens were good, as on the eve of the Olympiad Alexander Ipatov, a newcomer on the team, had won the U-20 World Junior Championship ahead of Hungarian prodigy Richard Rapport and Chinese champion Ding Liren. The average rating of the members of the men's team hovered around 2600, a new reality in Turkish chess. Furthermore, early this year the team had been strengthened with Dragan Solak. Dragan is originally from Serbia, but he can be considered half-Turkish as he has a Turkish wife, speaks the language and lives mostly in Turkey.

As Turkey hosted the Olympiad, three teams could take part. The second team consisted of young members that are supposed to play in the 2016 Olympiad. The third team was even more remarkable. It was composed of 8-year-old(!) boys who are supposed to be in the line-up of the Turkish national Team in 2023, when the centenary of the foundation of the Turkish state will be celebrated.

In the women's competition the host country also entered three teams, composed in accordance with the same concepts.

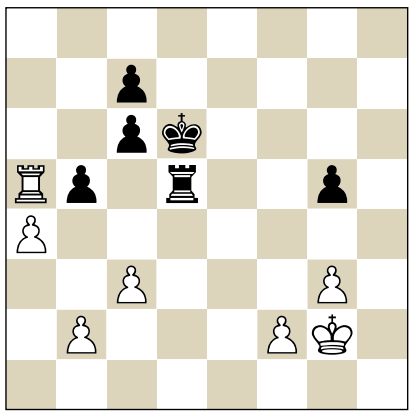
Although we had high hopes, the final result did not live up to our expectations. In the Open section the Turkish teams finished in 42nd, 48th and 151st place respectively (out of 157). The teams in the Women's section came 42nd, 59th and 85th (out of 127).

The starting position of my team was 31st, but I had good hope that we could finish among the top 20. For that to happen we would need to play better than our ratings and get favourable pairings in the last two rounds, when a lot if not everything is decided in the notorious Swiss System. Although the Swiss have enriched the world with many good things, I have never shared the positive feelings that exist for the Swiss System in chess. Maybe the system is fine for defining the ultimate winner (although even this is doubtful) but in order to determine the further ranking we might just as well cast dice, which might even be fairer... But perhaps this should be the subject of another article!

Let's have a look at the course the tournament took for us. The first round was no surprise, as the sympathetic team of Thailand was weak enough, so that our 4-0 win was more or less expected. The Czech Republic was our opponent in Round 2, and although the match ended in a 2-2 draw with no decisive results, I had the bitter feeling that we had missed winning chances on at least two boards.

The bells started ringing in Round 3. Our opponent South Africa could be considered a nice pairing, promising a win by a 3-1 or 3½-½ margin, but in the end only a 2½-1½ victory was gained. An unexpected loss by Baris Esen made me think that the only positive outcome was the gain of two match points for the win. After all, the team had already collected 5 out of 6 possible match points.

In Round 4 we were expected to have a strong pairing, and Croatia was the result. The match was tough but I was optimistic. All four players had nice positions and I was thinking that 2-2 or even 2½-1½ was on the cards. But Emre Can lost and two more games ended in draws, leaving the first board to decide the match.



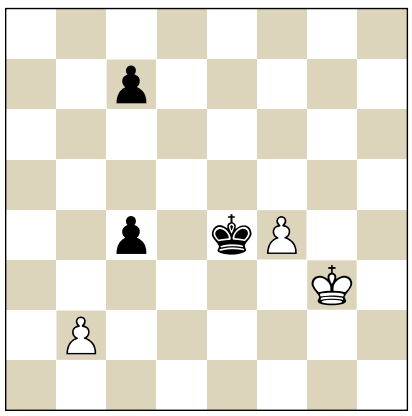
**Solak-Saric**
position after 42...♔d6

White is totally winning, and 2-2 seemed within reach...

**43.axb5?!** Easier was the immediate 43.c4!, for example 43...♖d4 (or 43...bxc4 44.♖xd5+ cxd5 45.f4 and wins) 44.cxb5 cxb5 45.♖xb5 ♖xa4 46.♖xg5, and White wins. **43...cxb5 44.c4?** A blunder. Correct was 44.♖a8 ♔e5 45.♖c8 ♖d2 46.b4 ♖d7 47.

**Rightfully proud. Ali Nihat Yazici (with red tie) surrounded by his 'children', the six teams that represented Turkey at the Istanbul Olympiad.**

f3, and White preserves all his winning chances. Dragan thought quite a lot before he played the text-move but he had missed something... **44...bxc4 45.♖xd5+ ♔xd5 46.f4 gxf4 47.gxf4 ♔e4 48.♔g3**



**48...c5!** This was the simple move he had forgotten about. Dragan was only counting on 48...♔d3? 49.f5 ♔c2 50.f6 ♔xb2 51.f7 c3 52.f8♕ c2 53.♕b4+ and wins. Now it's a theoretical draw, as White doesn't have the important b4-square at his disposal. **49.♔g4 ♔d3 50.f5 ♔c2 51.f6 ♔xb2 52.f7 c3 53.f8♕ c2 54.♕b8+ ♔a2 55.♕a8+ ♔b2 56.♕b7+ ♔a2 57.♕a6+ ♔b2 58.♕b5+ ♔a2 59.♕e2 ♔b1 60.♕d3 ♔b2 61.♕d2 ♔b1 62.♕d3 ♔b2 63.♕b5+ ♔a2 64.♕xc5 ♔b2 65.♕b4+ ♔a2 66.♕c3 ♔b1 67.♕b3+ ♔a1 68.♕xc2 ½-½**

I didn't know what to think, I was so disappointed... We lost 1½-2½, a valuable match point was gone.

Albania was our opponent in the 5th round and the team did what it was supposed to do. They won, scoring heavily, 3½-½, and added 2 more match points to our bag, making it a total of 7 out of 10.

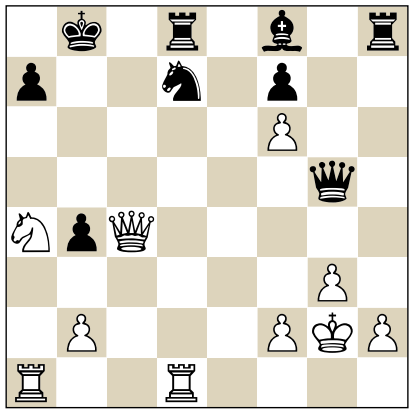
The first free day followed, on which I was mainly occupied with the FIDE Trainers' Commission, in which I've held the position of Secretary since 2009, and the players were resting, preparing for the next crucial rounds to come. (During the Olympiad, FIDE awarded Efstratios Grivas with the Euwe Medal for his training work with juniors in 2011 – ed.)

Tajikistan was the quite 'welcome' opponent for Round 6. In the end we won, but only with the minimum score of 2½-1½. I was feeling that we could and should have done better than that. We now had nine match points and we were inside our target, equally standing at positions 9-22.

Of course, when you're standing that high, something strong will come your way, in our case the team of the USA. The round started with a lot of optimism but ended in disaster, as the team was massacred ½-3½. According to the positions, 1½-2½ would have been nearer to the truth, but my players didn't take their chances when they had to and we paid for it. So be it, I thought, USA is a strong and respectable team, such things can happen.

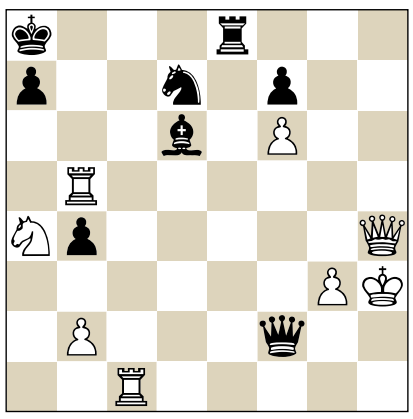
In Round 8 we met another strong team, Vietnam. The two last boards

ended in draws, but I remained optimistic about a good result. Have a look at the next game:



**Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son-Esen**
position after 23.♖ed1

**23...♕f5!** A prepared novelty and a good one. Previously 23...♖c8 24.♕xf7 ♘e5 25.♕d5 ♕xf6 26.♕b5+ ♔c7 27.♖ac1+ ♘c6 28.♕a5+ ♔b8 29.♕b5+ ♔c7 30.♖c2 ♖h6 31.♕a5+ ♔b8 32.♕b5+ ♔c7 ½-½, Savchenko-Cosma, Marseille 2004, and 23...♕e5 24.♘b6 ♕f5 25.h4 ♗c5 26.♘xd7+ ♖xd7 27.♖xd7 ♕xf2+ 28.♔h3 ♕f5+ 29.♕g4 1-0, Sharavdorj-Cheng, Las Vegas 2006, had been played. **24.♖d5 ♖xh2+! 25.♔xh2 ♕xf2+ 26.♔h3** A blunder is 26.♔h1? ♕f3+ 27.♔h2 ♗d6!, and wins. **26...♗d6! 27.♕h4?** 27.♖b5+ ♘b6 28.♕h4 ♕e2! should have been played. **27...♖e8! 28.♖b5+ ♔a8 29.♖c1**



White had spent nearly all his time by this point and his position is easily lost – why not be optimistic? **29...♖e2??** Once more I fell from my chair! 29...♘xf6 or 29...♕e3 would win trivially. Note that 29...♘b8, the move I was considering during the game, is met by 30.♖a1!, but Black can repeat: 30...♘d7 31.♖c1 ♘xf6 and win anyway. **30.♖c8+ ♘b8 31.♖bxb8+ ♗xb8 32.♕f4!** A better try than 32.♖xb8+ ♔xb8 33.♕xb4+ ♔c7. Now Black is forced to enter an endgame in which only White has chances... **32...♕xf4 33.gxf4 ♖f2?** In a state of shock Black missed his chances: 33...b3 34.♖f8 ♖c2 35.♖xf7 ♖c4 36.♖d7 ♖xa4 37.f5 ♖f4 38.♖d5 ♖c4 39.f7 ♖c8 40.♔g4 ♖f8 41.♖d7 a5 or 33...♔b7 34.♖f8 ♗xf4 35.♖xf7+ ♔c6, in both cases with a draw. **34.♔g3 ♖d2 35.♖f8 ♖d5 36.♖xf7 ♖f5 37.♔f3 ♖xf4+ 38.♔e3 ♗d6 39.♘c5! ♖xf6?** The ending of rook versus bishop is theoretically won for White. Black had to fight with 39...♖f1. **40.♖xf6 ♗xc5+ 41.♔d3 ♔b7 42.♔c4 ♗b6 43.♖e6 b3 44.♔xb3** And White won in 81 moves.

As Solak didn't manage to hold his slightly worse position, we even lost 1-3! Reality was brutal, we had to win our last three matches in order to get the desired 15 match points for a top-20 ranking.

However, the Swiss System had another surprise for us: after two losses in a row the strong team of Moldavia was our pairing in Round 9. What was for sure was that we had to fight! But again the team seemed to have run out of steam. Solak missed excellent winning chances against Bologan and even lost quickly (his third loss in a row!), while our second and third boards played below their standards. The 'honour' was saved by our bottom board, but a heavy ½-3½ loss marked the end of our valiant attempt...

Everybody was psychologically tired in Round 10, when we faced Estonia. We won 2½-1½, but Ipatov also lost his third game in a row, against a 2150 player!!

The last round, Round 11, was played after another free day. The role of a trainer is mirthless when he has to convince his players to fight for a lost cause. Still, somehow I managed to wake them up for the match against Finland. Finally, the team gave a good account of themselves, winning with a clean 4-0.

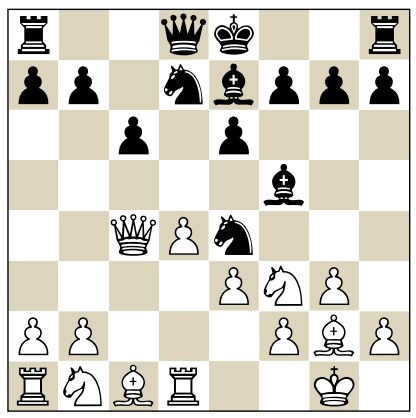
SL 1.4 – D23
**Tomi Nybäck**
**Dragan Solak**
Istanbul 2012 (11)

**1.d4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♕b3 dxc4 5.♕xc4 ♗f5 6.g3 e6 7.♗g2 ♘bd7 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.e3 ♘e4**

The immediate 9...h5 was seen in Bologan-Solak in Round 9. There followed 10.♕e2 ♘e4 11.♘e1 e5 12.♘c2 h4 13.g4 h3 14.♗h1 ♗h7 15.f4 exf4 16.exf4 f5 17.♗xe4 fxe4 18.♘c3 ♕b6 19.f5 0-0-0 20.♗f4 ♘f6 21.b4 ♗d6? (21...♗g8!) 22.♗xd6 ♖xd6 23.g5 ♖xd4 24.♔h1 ♘e8 25.♘xd4 ♕xd4 26.♖ac1 ♘d6 27.♕g4 ♗g8 28.f6+ ♔c7 29.f7 ♗xf7 30.♖xf7+ 1-0.

**10.♖d1**

After 10.♘fd2 ♘xd2 (better 10...♘d6! 11.♕e2 e5 with unclear play) 11.♗xd2 0-0 12.e4 ♗g6 13.♗e3 e5 14.♖d1 exd4 15.♗xd4 White had an edge in Jovanic-Battaglini, Rijeka 2010.

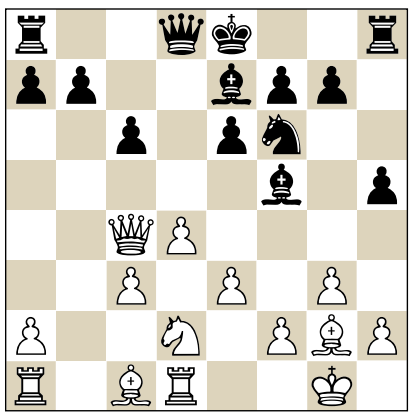


**10...h5!?**

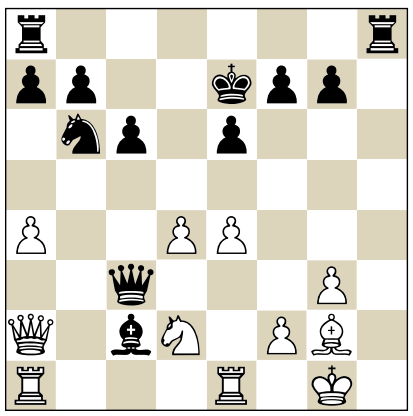
As we had rating advantage on the other three boards, I had told Dragan before the game that he was allowed to take risks.

**11.♘fd2 ♘df6 12.♘c3 ♘xc3 13.bxc3**

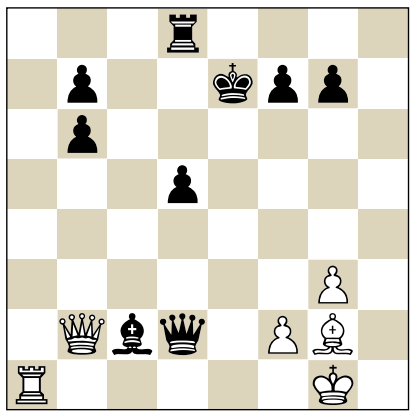
Interesting was 13.♕xc3!? h4 14.e4 ♗g6 15.♖e1 hxg3 16.hxg3 ♕d7, with complicated play.



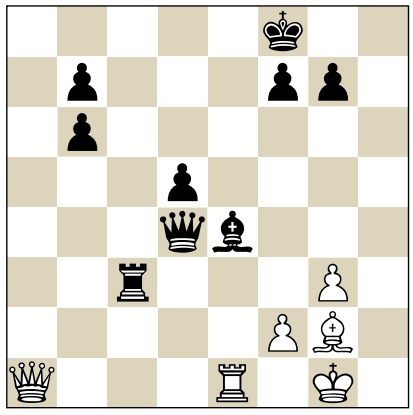
**13...♗c2! 14.♖e1 h4 15.e4 hxg3 16.hxg3 ♕a5**
The black queen is heading for h5, but the c3-pawn can be a weakness as well!
**17.a4** 17.♘b3 ♕h5 18.♗f4 ♖c8 is still quite unclear.
**17...♘d7 18.♗a3 ♘b6 19.♕a2 ♕xc3** There is no way back: 19...♗xa3?! 20.♕xc2 ♗e7 21.d5!, and White has the initiative.
**20.♗xe7 ♔xe7**



**21.a5**
White could opt for 21.♖ec1!? ♕xd2 22.d5!, when it seems that it's a mess!
**21...♕xd2 22.axb6 axb6 23.♕b2 ♖xa1 24.♖xa1 ♖d8 25.d5**
With hindsight I would go for 25.♖c1 ♕xd4 26.♕xc2 b5 27.♕a2, but obviously White wanted more...
**25...cxd5 26.exd5 exd5**



**27.♖c1?** A blunder. Still unclear is 27.♕xg7 ♗g6 28.♗f3.
**27...♖c8 28.♗h3 ♖c3!**
The only move but a good one, blocking the white queen. White is about lost.
**29.♖a1 ♕d4 30.♖e1+ ♔f8 31.♗g2 ♗e4! 32.♕a1**



**32...♕c5!** White was hoping for 32...♗xg2?? 33.♕a8+.
**33.♗xe4 dxe4 34.♕a8+ ♕c8 35.♕xc8+ ♖xc8 36.♖xe4 ♖c6**
The rook ending is easily won for Black.
**37.f4 b5 38.♔f2 ♖b6 39.♖b4 ♔e7 40.♔e3 ♔d6 41.♖d4+** Or 41.♔d4 ♔c6 42.♖b1 ♖a6 and wins.
**41...♔c5 42.♖d7 b4**
White resigned.

In the end 13 match points out of a possible 22 were collected, only good enough for 42nd place. Six wins, one draw and four losses. The truth is that the team played badly. Although recently everybody, except for Emre Can, had played several good tournaments in a row, it seemed as if the first three boards had chosen the Olympiad to have their worst tournament of the year. The two last boards played well, but could not provide sufficient compensation.

Finding an explanation is quite a challenge. There were no problems, the relations between the players were fine, they lived a healthy life, they were well prepared in the openings (we hardly had a bad opening position), but still we performed badly. As I cannot find a logical explanation for the team's bad performance, I am obliged to take all responsibility – after all I was the team's captain!

In two years' time the 41st Olympiad will be held in Tromsø, Norway. By then the young Turkish team will have gained in experience and I am sure it will have a much better result. After all, our 'project' is only six years old and still needs time to mature. The Turkish Chess Federation has done a lot (and not only for top chess!) and deserves to see the harvest of its good work. Until then I keep hoping that the Swiss System will be banned for ever! ■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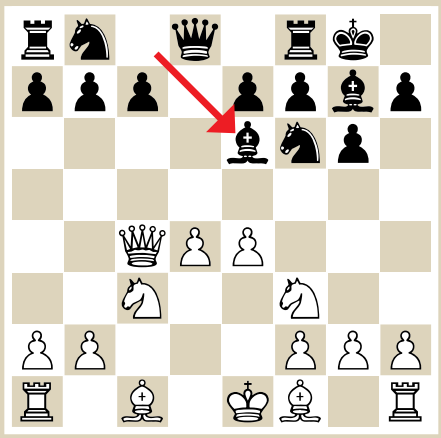
# Modern Provocation in the Grünfeld

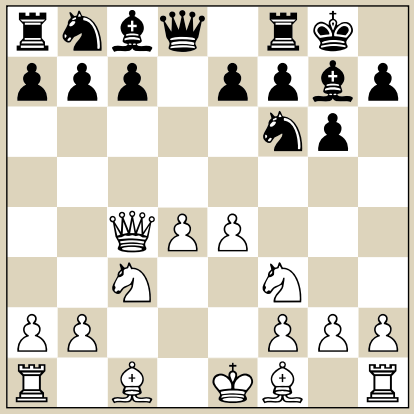
Jeroen Bosch

7...♗e6!?



GI 10.2 – D97
**Dmitry Jakovenko**
**Peter Svidler**
Moscow 2012

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♕b3 dxc4 6.♕xc4 0-0 7.e4**



We have arrived at one of the main tabiya positions of the Grünfeld. Two of the first practitioners of this system were the World Champions Botvinnik (against Levenfish in 1933) and Euwe (against Alekhine in 1935). Indeed, this is a line which has found favour with classical positional players like Smyslov, Portisch, Polugaevsky, Uhlmann and Karpov. It is a particular favourite of Dutch grandmaster Genna Sosonko, whose games are obligatory study material for students of 5.♕b3. Ivanchuk, Anand and Carlsen are notable modern supporters.

Looking at the diagrammed position it is difficult to find fault with White's opening strategy: he has formed the perfect pawn centre, his knights are on their natural squares and the bishops will be able to develop freely. On top of that he has avoided weakening his pawn structure as in the Exchange Variation (bxc3).

All this has come at a price, though: the early development of the queen. If Black is to gain counterplay it is often at the expense of her majesty, by gaining time to attack White's central pawns.

Thus, the popular Hungarian Variation is based on 7...a6, followed by ...b5 and ...c5.

The old Boleslavsky idea 7...c6 has the same basis but is hardly played these days.

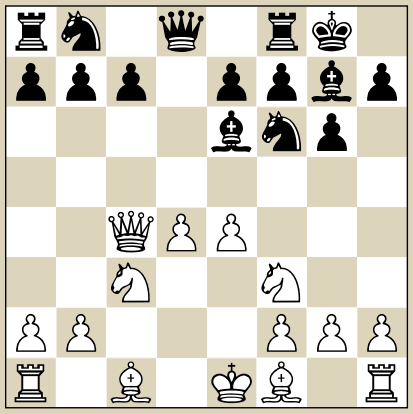
Likewise, the Smyslov Variation, 7...♗g4 followed by ...♘fd7-b6, also combines the attack on the queen with pressure on the centre.

The provocative 7...♘c6 has a particular tactical point in 8.d5 ♘a5! (gaining time on the queen), followed by 9...c6.

Finally, it is only in the Prins Variation, 7...♘a6, that Black postpones his attack on the queen (although later ...♘f6-e4-d6 is on the cards).

All these lines have their pros and cons and are intricate opening systems in their own right.

In 2012 an almost entirely new system came to the fore, one that is even more provocative than 7...♘c6, and one that touches the core of White's set-up. I am talking about the remarkable SOS move **7...♗e6!?**



Wow! Try and beat that!

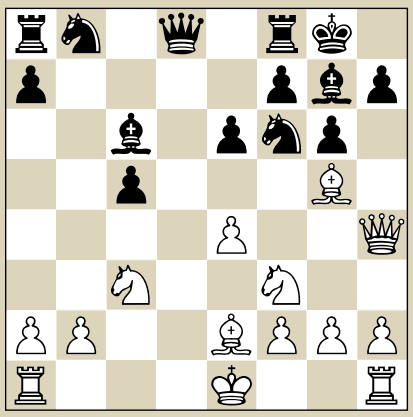
Black develops his bishop to a square from which it can immediately be chased away with the time-gaining 8. d5. This move must be critical and will be studied in the next game (Gordon-Howell, North Shields 2012).

If not 8.d5, then White will have to move his queen – but where to?

**8.♕d3**

A sound move. The queen is safeguarded from further attacks. The drawback is that Black can immediately execute his Grünfeld lever c7-c5.

In the highly entertaining game Morozevich-Giri, Biel 2012, White opted for 8.♕b5!?, and after 8...♗d7! 9.♕c5!? (9.♕xb7 ♗c6, followed by 10...♘xe4, and Black is more than fine; 9.♕b3 allows 9...c5, and Black is OK after both 10.dxc5 ♕a5 and 10.d5 b5! 11. ♗xb5 ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 ♕a5+ 13.♗d2 ♕xb5) 9...b6 10.♕g5 c5 11.dxc5 ♗c6 (also strong is 11...♘c6!?) 12.♕h4 bxc5 13.♗e2 e6, and now, after 14. ♗g5, Giri equalized with



14...h6! 15.♗xh6 ♘xe4 16.♕f4 ♘xc3 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.bxc3 ♕f6 19.♕e3 ♘d7. After many adventures (including a mutual form of chess blindness in the time-trouble phase) the game eventually ended in a black win.

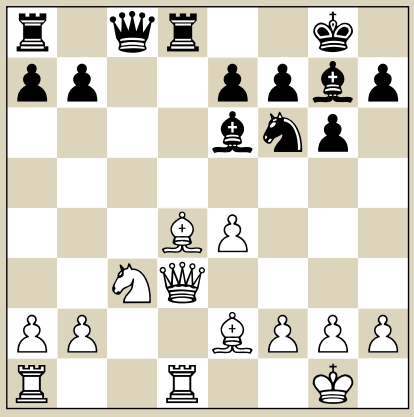
White hasn't tried 8.♕a4 yet, but in that case Black can also lash out with 8...c5, for after 9.dxc5 (9.d5 ♗d7 and now 10.♕b3 transposes to a line given above in the Morozevich-Giri game after 10...b5!) 9...♘bd7 Black's edge in development provides him with ample compensation for the pawn that he will undoubtedly retrieve sometime soon.

**8...c5 9.d5**

The only ambitious reply.

After 9.dxc5 Black is almost spoilt for choice. For example 9...♕c8!? (9...♘c6 is also possible; 9...♘bd7!? 10.c6 bxc6 11.♘g5 ♕b6 12.♘xe6 fxe6 is strategically risky, but Black's edge in development still gives him excellent play) 10. ♗e2 (note that White is clearly worse after 10.♗e3?! ♖d8 11.♕c2?! ♘g4) 10...♘a6 11.0-0 ♘xc5, and Black's position is already preferable.

The passive 9.♗e2 is merely equal after 9...cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♕c8 (again Black has an active and riskier alternative in 10...♘c6 11.♘xe6 ♕xd3 12.♗xd3 fxe6) 11.0-0 (11.♘xe6 ♕xe6 12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♗f4 ♖fd8 14.♕e3 ♘d4, and White should start thinking about equalizing with 15.♖ad1) 11...♖d8 12. ♗e3 ♘c6 13.♖fd1 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4



14...♘g4! 15.♘d5 ♗xd5 16.♗xg7 ♗c4 (or 16...♔xg7 17.exd5 ♘f6) 17.♕xc4 ♕xc4 18.♗xc4 ♔xg7, a long sample line that demonstrates that White has absolutely nothing.

**9...♗c8**

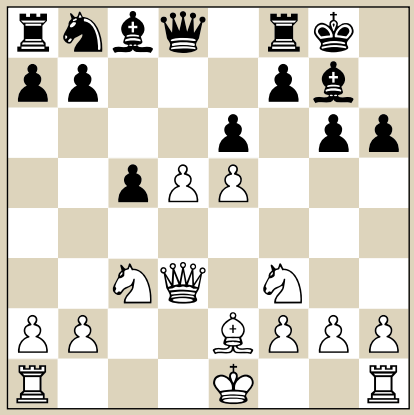
All the way back. We will see that this is how Black replies to the immediate 8.d5 as well.

9...♗g4 is best met by 10.♘g5!? (10. ♗e2 e6) 10...♘a6 11.h3 ♗d7 12.♗e3.

**10.♗e3**

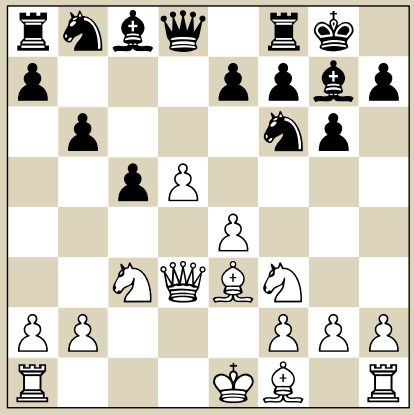
At the Istanbul Olympiad well-known Grünfeld expert Lubomir Ftacnik could be found behind the black pieces. His opponent went for 10.♗e2, when after 10...e6 Black need not worry about 11.d6!? ♘c6, which sees Black surrounding the intrepid pawn: 12.♗f4 (12.♗g5 h6) 12...e5! (12...♖e8) 13.♘xe5 (13.♗xe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♘h5 15.♘c4 ♘f4 16.♕f3 ♘e6!) 13... ♘h5!, and now 14.♗xh5 (14.♘xc6 ♘xf4 15.♘xd8 ♘xd3+ 16.♗xd3 ♖xd8 with a black edge) 14...♘xe5 15.♕g3 ♕xd6 16.♗e2 is a plausible line. Black has nearly equalized.

So instead the game went 11.♗g5 h6! 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.e5 ♗g7



14.♖d1 (14.d6 ♘c6 and Black's unopposed Grünfeld bishop is sufficient compensation for the protected passed pawn) 14...exd5 15.♘xd5 ♘c6 and White had to take care to preserve the balance in Vl.Georgiev-Ftacnik, Istanbul 2012.

**10...b6**



**11.h3**

This takes away square g4 from either Black's bishop or knight. Against other moves too, Black will attack the

## Jeroen Bosch

d5-pawn with ...e6. Thus 11.♕d2 e6 12.♗e2 exd5 13.exd5 ♖e8 is fine for Black, as is 11.♗e2 e6 (but not 11...♘g4 12.♗f4 ♗a6 13.♕d2 ♗xe2 14.♕xe2 ♘d7 15.0-0 ♘ge5, when White is still a little better after 16.♘d2!).

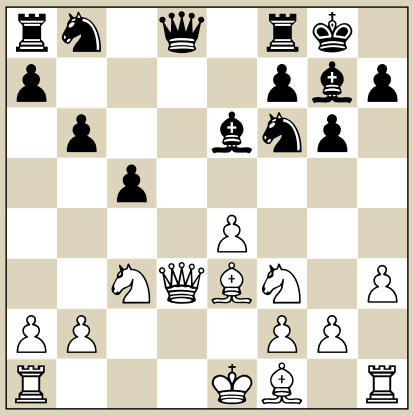
**11...e6 12.dxe6**

White never gains much from advancing the pawn: 12.d6 ♗a6 (12...♘c6) 13.♕d2 ♗xf1 14.♔xf1 ♘c6.

Note that 12.♗e2?! ♗a6 13.♕d2 ♗xe2 favours Black.

Play is somewhat similar to the Prins Variation (7...♘a6) after 12.♖d1 exd5 13.exd5 ♖e8 14.♗e2 ♗f5 15.♕d2 ♘e4, with active piece play for Black. He will easily be able to keep the passed d-pawn in check.

**12...♗xe6**



**13.♕xd8**

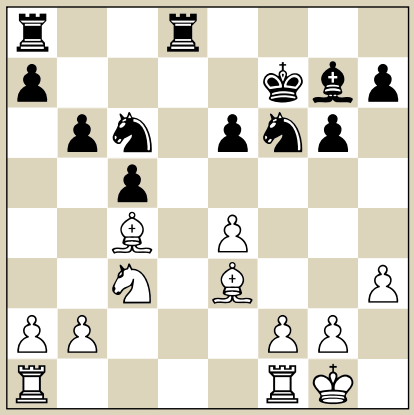
Black has lovely compensation for the exchange after 13.e5 ♕xd3 14.♗xd3 ♘d5 15.♗e4 ♘xe3 16.fxe3 ♘d7 17.♗xa8 ♖xa8.

**13...♖xd8 14.♘g5 ♘c6 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.♗c4 ♔f7**

Make no mistake about the verdict of this position. Black's excellent control over the centre is at least sufficient to balance White's bishop pair.

**17.0-0**

White finally castles, and the opening phase is certainly completed by now. I will give the remaining moves with a few comments. Note that this game was a rapid game, albeit a very important one (it was played in the series of rapid games that decided the Russian Super Final of 2012 – necessary because of the six-way(!) tie for first place in the regular round robin).



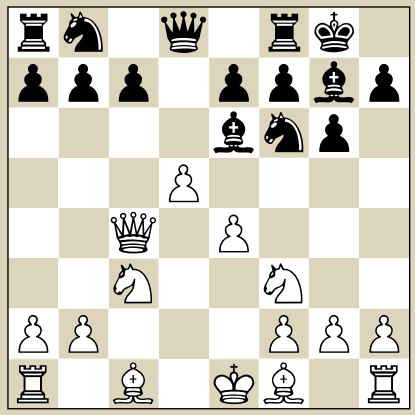
**17...♘e8! 18.♖ad1 ♘d6 19.♗d3 ♘b4 20.♗b1 ♘c4** Black's knights are coming in. White is already under pressure. **21.♗c1 a6 22.♔h2 ♗d4! 23.♖fe1?!** 23.a3 ♘c6 24.♗a2 was stronger and enough to keep the balance. **23...♖a7! 24.b3 ♖ad7 25.♗g5** 25.bxc4 ♗xc3 26.♖xd7+ ♖xd7 27.♖f1 ♘c6 28.f4 ♘a5 is very awkward for White. **25...♘b2 26.♗xd8 ♘xd1 27.♖xd1 ♖xd8** White has lost his bishop pair and must now hope to draw on the strength of the bishops of opposite colour. **28.f4 ♔e7 29.♘e2 e5! 30.f5 b5 31.♘c3 ♖f8 32.♘e2 ♖d8 33.♘c3 ♖d6 34.♘d5+** Going for the bishops of opposite colour. White must also suffer in the rook ending after 34.♖c1 ♗xc3 35.♖xc3 ♖d1 36.a3 ♖xb1 37.axb4 cxb4. **34...♘xd5 35.exd5 c4 36.fxg6 hxg6 37.♗e4?** 37.♖f1! **37...♖f6! 38.♖d2 g5 39.g3 ♖f1** 39...c3. **40.♖e2 cxb3 41.axb3 a5 42.♖a2?** 42.h4. **42...a4! 43.bxa4 b4 44.♖c2 ♖e1 45.♗d3 b3** Black is winning. **46.♖c7+ ♔d6 47.♖c6+ ♔xd5 48.♖c8 b2 49.♖d8+ ♔c5 50.♖b8 e4**

White resigned.

GI 10.2 – D97
**Stephen Gordon**
**David Howell**
North Shields 2012

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♕b3 dxc4 6.♕xc4 0-0 7.e4 ♗e6 8.d5**

The critical move, of course. White gains two tempi for his development (8.d4-d5, and another move of his choice), as Black is forced to withdraw his bishop to c8.



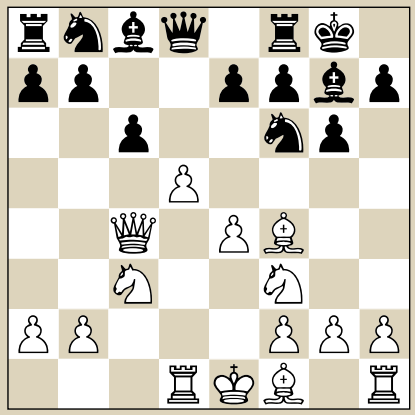
**8...♗c8** In the penultimate round of the Olympiad I witnessed the following tragedy. The number two of the FIDE women rating list of September, Anna Muzychuk, had opted for 7...♗e6 and I was following the game with some interest (knowing that this idea was in my SOS file of potential subjects), when she suddenly played 8...♗g4??. This is horrible, as after 9.e5 Black cannot avoid the loss of a piece. After 9...♗xf3 10.exf6 exf6 11.gxf3 ♘d7 Slovenia's Board 1 fought bravely on until almost the 60th move, but it was to no avail (Cori-A.Muzychuk, Istanbul 2012).

Also bad, by the way, is 8...♗d7? 9.e5 b5 10.♕h4, and White has a large advantage. Black needs the d7-square for his knight, otherwise 9.e5 is simply too strong.

**9.♗e2** White seeks to complete his development as soon as possible.

The whole SOS idea of 7...♗e6 8.d5 ♗c8 was first played by an International Master from Turkmenistan named Khandzhar Odeev (see also a letter by his brother Ahmed Odeev in Yearbook 104, pp. 26-27). In his practice he also faced:

■ 9.♗f4 c6 10.♖d1



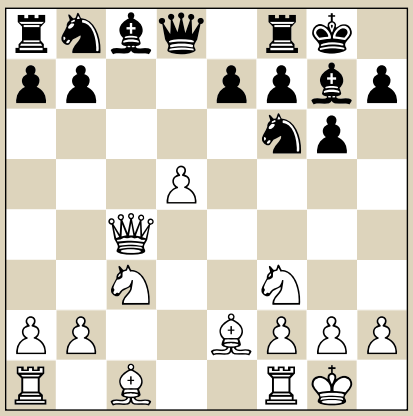
10...b5 (very sharp; the natural 10...cxd5! equalizes easily, which proves that 9.♗f4 lacks punch: 11.exd5 ♘e8, and after the knight has landed on d6 Black will be doing well. Note that 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.♖xd5 ♕e8 is equal) 11.♕b3 (11.♕c5 ♕a5! is very tricky, and fine for Black) 11...♕a5 12.♘d2! a6 13.♗e2 cxd5 14.e5! ♘e4? (14...♘g4! 15.♘xd5 ♘c6 was correct and would have fully justified Black's play) 15.♘xd5± ♘c6? 16.♕c2+–, and White won in Budnikov-Odeev, Azov 1991. The stem game of 7...♗e6. Courage and originality aren't always rewarded in chess!

■ 9.♗g5 c6 10.♖d1 b5 (Odeev again goes for the sharpest option. Here, too, 10...cxd5 is the safe alternative) 11.♕b3 ♕a5 12.♘d2 a6, and Black has a very decent game; after 13.♗e2 cxd5 14.exd5 ♘bd7 15.a3 ♗b7 16.0-0 ♕c7 17.♖fe1 ♘c5 18.♕a2 ♖ad8 Odeev had a distinct advantage and won in Lima-Odeev, Moscow 1994. Instead of 11.♕b3, 11.♕c5!? looks strong, but then too, Black has 11...♕a5!, when after 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.e5 he obtains dangerous counterplay with 13...♘d7!. Note that 9.e5 is now (with the bishop on c8!) strongly met by 9...♘fd7!.

**9...c6** By now it will be clear that this way to attack White's d5-pawn is the strategic idea behind provoking 8.d5. If you like, the concept behind the Grünfeld (and other 'Hypermodern' openings like the Alekhine) is 'provocation'. Black is luring White's central pawns forward only in order to be able to subsequently attack and destroy them.

**10.0-0 cxd5 11.exd5**

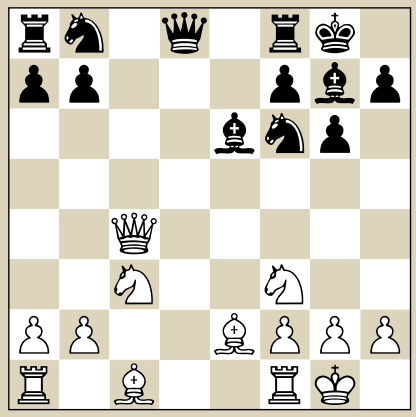
I am quite sure that we will see more developments from this position. Black certainly has options here.



**11...♘e8**

Bringing the knight to the desired d6-square from where it blocks White's isolated pawn as fast as possible.

Odeev has played the neutralizing 11...e6 12.dxe6 ♗xe6, but here Black has to play accurately to keep the balance:

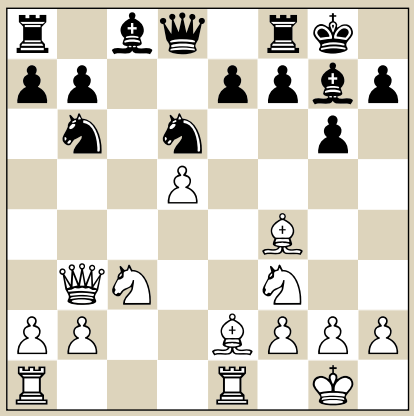


– 13.♕b4 ♕c8 14.♗g5 (14.♖d1 ♘c6 15.♕h4=) 14...♘d5 (14...♘c6! 15.♕h4 ♘d5 with even chances) 15.♘xd5 ♗xd5 16.♕d2 ♖e8 (16...♗e4 17.♘d4 ♕c5! – 17...♘c6 18.♘b5±) 17.♖fe1 ♗e6 18.♘d4 ♘c6 19.♘xe6 ♖xe6 20.♖ac1 (20.♗c4 ♖xe1+ 21.♖xe1, and the two bishops promise White a slight edge) 20...♕f8 21.♗c4 ♖xe1+ 22.♖xe1 h6 23.♗e3 ♖d8 24.♕c2 ♕b4! was completely balanced in Novichkov-Odeev, Moscow 1998.

– 13.♕h4 ♘bd7?! (13...♘d5 14.♗g5 ♕a5 15.♘e4 – 15.♗d2 ♕d8 – 15...♘d7 16.♗h6 ♘5f6 17.♘fg5 ♗d5 looks equal) 14.♗h6?! (14.♖d1!±) 14...♘h5 15.♕xd8 ♖fxd8 16.♗xg7 ♘xg7 ½-½ Coelho-Lima, Sao Caetano do Sul 2009.

As an afterthought you might like to investigate 11...♘bd7.

**12.♖e1 ♘d6 13.♕a4 ♘d7 14.♗f4 ♘b6 15.♕b3**

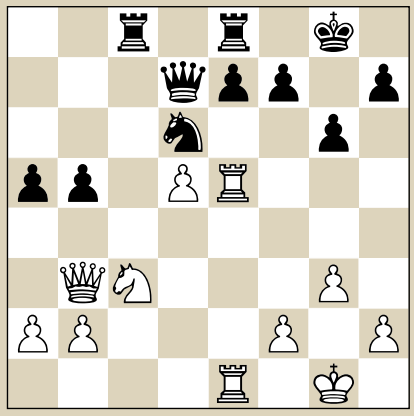


Whether you want to opt for 11...♘e8 or 11...e6 probably depends on how comfortable you are playing such a position. Black is very solid and has long-term hopes based on the isolated pawn. White, on the other hand, has more space (owing to his d5-pawn!) and some pressure. Play is reminiscent of the Panov Attack in the Caro-Kann when Black plays 5...g6. I give the remainder of the game with a few brief notes.

**15...♗g4 16.♘e5**

Now Black can exchange a few minor pieces, which favours the side with less space. White should be slightly better after 16.h3 ♗xf3 17.♗xf3 ♖c8 (preparing ...♘b6-c4) 18.♖ac1.

**16...♗xe2 17.♖xe2 ♖c8 18.♖d1 ♘d7 19.♘xd7 ♕xd7** Now Black doesn't have a worry in the world. **20.♗e5 ♗xe5 21.♖xe5 b5 22.♖de1 ♖fe8 23.g3 a5** White has to take a little care now, as Black's counterplay on the queenside is faster than any pressure White may get on the kingside.



**24.a4?! ♘c4 25.♖5e2 b4∓ 26.♘e4 ♖ed8 27.♘d2 ♘b6 28.♖xe7 ♕xd5 29.♕xd5?!** 29.♕e3. **29...♖xd5 30.♘e4 ♔f8 31.♖b7 ♘xa4 32.b3 ♘c3** 32...♘b2!. **33.♘f6 ♖f5 34.♘d7+ ♔g7 35.f4 h5 36.♖e5 ♘d5?! 37.♖xf5 gxf5 38.♘e5** White is so active now that he has enough for the pawn. **38...♖c1+ 39.♔f2 ♖c2+ 40.♔g1 ♖c1+ 41.♔g2 ♘e3+ 42.♔h3 ♔f6 43.♖xf7+ ♔e6 44.♖a7 ♖c3 45.♖xa5 ♖xb3 46.♘c6 ♖b2 47.♖e5+ ♔d6** and with **48.♖xe3** White went for a drawn rook ending. The peace treaty was signed on move 62. ■

Hans Ree

# Searching for eternal laws

**Per Skjoldager and Jørn Erik Nielsen have written the first full-fledged biography of Aron Nimzowitsch, although their great work is not completed yet. Hans Ree reckons that his fascination with Nimzowitsch had much to do with the fact that he never really understood him.**

Nimzowitsch. For me the cadence of the name that I used to pronounce like almost everybody else incorrectly with the stress on the first syllable, stood for solemnity and Talmudic wisdom. Compare it with Savielly Tartakower, his hypermodern comrade in arms, whose name has the rhythm of a merrily cantering foal. Tartakower, master of paradox, took pleasure in strong opinions, but always a bit tongue-in-cheek. Nimzowitsch earnestly searched for eternal laws and claimed to have found them.

Genna Sosonko once told me that the famous Latvian player, writer and coach Alexander Koblenz had been an avid follower of world news, to which his invariable reaction used to be: 'But what does this mean for the Jews of Riga?' Of course this phrase easily lent itself to parody – a novelty in the Najdorf, but what does this mean... – but it is certainly true that the Jews of Riga, and non-Jews as well, for centuries had good reason to follow the caprices of history with trepidation.

Skjoldager and Nielsen give a table to show the rise of the Jewish population in Riga. From 695 in the year 1850, the number rose to 43,672 in 1935. The next number, for 1941, is 150. This was the first year of the German occupation of Latvia.

The authors point out that two of Aron's younger brothers were murdered with their entire families by the Nazis. Aron himself did not have to witness how his pessimistic view of man and society was confirmed by horrors that even to him may have seemed unimaginable. He died in Copenhagen in 1935, only 48 years old.

## Losing his name on the road

A number of books about Aron Nimzowitsch mainly concentrate on his games, his writings and his influence on opening theory and general strategy. As far as I know, until recently the most extensive biographical sketch had been that by Jacques Hannak: *Aaron Nimzowitsch, Lebenslauf eines Pessimisten*, written in Hannak's well-known hagiographic style.

*Aron Nimzowitsch On the Road to Chess Mastery, 1886-1924* is the first fully-fledged biography. The authors intend to complete it with a second volume on Nimzowitsch's final years, but considering the amount of work that lies ahead, they can't say when this will appear.

By the way, they point out that Nimzowitsch himself always – apart from a short time when he used the name Arnold – used the spelling Aron, with only one a. Of his surname many versions exist, a fate he shared with Tartakower, who like Nimzowitsch stemmed from a region with what can euphemistically be called 'a complicated history'. Anyway, Aron's father, when he moved to Riga, adopted the transliteration Niemzowitsch from his Russian name, which meant 'Son of a German'.

Max Euwe, undoubtedly aware of the havoc that English speakers were playing with his own name, always pronounced the name correctly as Neemsóvich, with the stress on the second syllable. The incorrect stress on the first syllable is practically forced on us by the word Nimzo-Indian.

In a Latvian passport, issued in 1919, the e in his name had disappeared. Traditionally this omission has been blamed on a careless official, but the biographers give reason to think that Nimzowitsch himself had preferred this spelling already earlier.

## Rubinstein's fly?

This is a massive tome of 456 pages, produced by McFarland publishers in the impeccable way that they are known for. The authors have left no stone unturned to find a wealth of unknown material about the life and games of Nimzowitsch. Many interesting and beautiful old photographs adorn the well-written text. A great book.

Its subtitle *On the Road to Chess Mastery* may suggest that it is only about his formative years, but of course at the age of 38, when the book stops, Nimzo-

witsch had already established himself for a long time as one of the best players in the world. It is true, though, that in 1924 his influential writings had not yet appeared as books, only as articles in chess magazines, and that two of his finest tournament victories (Dresden 1926 and Carlsbad 1929) were still to come.

I was especially intrigued by the part about World War I and its aftermath, a period of great turbulence in Nimzowitsch's life. About this period Hans Kmoch has written (it can be found in the archives of *chesscafe.com*): 'When civil war broke out in Russia around 1917, Nimzovich was trapped in the Baltic war zone between the rightists and the leftists. He escaped forced service in one of the armies by complaining so insistently about a fly on his head, that they finally left the "madman" alone.' The biographers suggest that Kmoch may have been confused with a Rubinstein story. But maybe it's the other way around.

Anyway, Kmoch's account shows that even Nimzowitsch's contemporaries had only a vague idea about his experiences at that time. Skjoldager and Nielsen have much more to say about it, among other things that Nimzowitsch did indeed serve in the czarist Russian army.

## A fateful meeting with Tarrasch

He was born in 1886 in Riga, the son of an affluent Jewish merchant, Schaie Niemzowitsch, who was a strong chess player and a problemist. As a youngster Aron studied mathematics in Germany and Switzerland, visited the local chess cafés and played in international tournaments with considerable success. In 1904 he played an offhand game with Tarrasch in his home town of Nuremberg, which he later described as the seed of his ideological enmity with the great Praeceptor Germaniae (teacher of Germany) even though nothing more dramatically happened than that Tarrasch proclaimed, with many spectators around:

COURTESY ROLF LITTORIN

**Aron Nimzowitsch: 'But in silence there lived and searched one who loved the truth in chess and strived to discover her eternal, never-changing laws in a hard struggle. And this man – was I.'**

'Never in my life have I had such a won game after 10 moves as I have now!' The game was drawn.

His wanderings had brought him to the top of the chess world, but in 1910 he decided to settle permanently in Riga, maybe because of his illness – tuberculosis had been diagnosed two years earlier – or because his father had decided to stop funding his studies.

As a Dutchman I'd like to point out a game that the biographers may have missed during their extensive research. It was an offhand game in Riga, but for a stake, against Jan Esser, who would become Dutch champion the year after. It ended in a draw and was published in the magazine of the Dutch chess federation, of course an unlikely source for research on Nimzowitsch in Riga in 1912.

His famous banner-waving article *Entspricht Dr. Tarraschs 'Die Moderne Schachpartie' wirklich moderner Auffassung?* (Does 'The Modern Chess Game' by Dr. Tarrasch really correspond to a modern view?) appeared in the *Wiener Schachzeitung* of March/April 1913. It must be said that Nimzowitsch had been provoked by many condescending and superficial remarks by Tarrasch on his way of playing.

Lest we forget that he was still a Russian citizen by that time, he shared first place with Alekhine in the All-Russian Tournament of Masters in 1914. Later that year he played in the famous tournament in St. Petersburg, won by Lasker ahead of Capablanca, where he failed to reach the final group, a big setback.

## War experiences

The War interrupted international chess and brought the family business to ruins.

# Hans Ree

For a few years his life went on undisturbed, but in 1916 he was summoned to serve in the Russian army. The biographers quote a long contribution to a German-language Czech newspaper in which Nimzowitsch describes some of his experiences in Ostashkov, the Russian town to which he was transferred.

Nimzowitsch relates that as a guard he let a conscripted farmer take leave from the barracks for a few days. After confessing his sin to his superiors, he was greeted by his comrades with frosty silence. 'Finally a black-bearded farmer approached me and roughly snarled at me: "Do you not know the soldier's code? Give the drowning man a blow (lest he pull you down with him)." After an initial shock Nimzowitsch realized that this was a valid critique of the self-glorifying city-dweller, proud of his good deeds, and in his article he called the lesson from the Russian farmer one of the most beautiful *Privatissimums* he had ever been granted in his life.

In 1917 he was demobilized from the Russian army and returned home.

That year, after the Russian army had collapsed, Riga fell into the hands of the German army. By the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 Riga came under German authority, but at the end of 1918 the Bolshevik Red Army invaded Latvia and in January 1919 they occupied Riga. The biographers quote extensive newspaper reports about Nimzowitsch's lectures in Denmark, a few years later, about the Bolshevik Terror.

The next invasion was that of volunteer rightist German troops, the *Freikorps*, that put an end to the Red Terror to succeed it with the White Terror. Finally, in July 1919, Latvia became independent.

## Settling in Denmark

The following year Nimzowitsch headed for Scandinavia to give simuls and lectures, first in Sweden, later in Norway and finally in Denmark, where he settled and remained till his death in 1935.

The biographers insist that there was no political motive at all behind his emigration. There was money to be earned in Scandinavia, untouched by the ravages of the war. But I wonder. Being recruited into the Russian army, seeing your country being overrun by foreign invaders from East and West... It's no easy matter to live in a small country with a complicated history.

In Copenhagen he lived a sober and relatively quiet life, though not without chess-related conflicts. He won Dresden 1926, 1½ points ahead of Alekhine and 2 points ahead of Rubinstein. After his victory at Carlsbad 1929, ahead of Capablanca, Spielmann and Rubinstein, he wrote: 'The chess world is obligated to organize a match between the champion of the world and the winner of this Carlsbad tournament – indeed this is a moral obligation. If the world of chess should remain deaf to its obligation, on the other hand, it should amount to an absolutely unforgivable omission, carrying with it a heavy burden of guilt.'

The chess world, if we can really consider it as a collective unity, was still considering Capablanca as the most deserving candidate for a match, and anyway it lacked the power to force Alekhine to play against either Capablanca or Nimzowitsch.

Nimzowitsch, who had suffered of bad health often, died in March 1935, probably of pneumonia.

## Dangers, imagined and real

'If you prick us, do we not bleed?' lamented Shylock. Nimzowitsch had a very thin skin and was often suffering from imagined pricks. The biographers do not hide the fact that already from his youth he was a very difficult man, making many enemies, and they add some striking anecdotes to the well-known Nimzowitsch stories.

On a good day Nimzowitsch used to complain that the waiters always served him last, but there were bad days when he thought that the waiter would poison him. The biographers quote the Danish master Jens Enevoldsen, who related that once in a restaurant Nimzowitsch was offered a cup of coffee by I.O. Pedersen, a Danish player. Nimzowitsch whispered that he didn't dare to drink coffee there, since the waiter wanted to poison him. When Pedersen ordered two coffees anyway, Nimzowitsch swapped the cups, so that Pedersen had to drink the dangerous one. As Pedersen was able to see the greatness of the man, in spite of his peculiarities, the two were to become great friends.

Hans Kmoch quotes Tartakower, who said about Nimzowitsch: 'He pretends to be crazy in order to drive us all crazy.' But later in his article he relates a few incidents that make it clear that Nimzowitsch was not pretending anything, but that he was simply rather oblivious to the impact of his behaviour on others.

In 1934 Nimzowitsch was reporting for a Dutch newspaper on the world championship match between Alekhine and Bogoljubow. This was in Nazi Germany, where a Jew would have good reason to feel unsafe. A frequent visitor to the match was Reichsminister Hans Frank, who was to become Governor of Poland during World War II and later to be hanged as a prominent war criminal after the Nuremberg Trials.

At some point, the whole chess troupe was invited for lunch by Frank, including the Jews. Jacques Mieses didn't show up, but Nimzowitsch did. Kmoch writes: 'At the luncheon he demonstrated his usual persecution mania by complaining first about a dirty plate and then about a dirty knife. The Reichsminister, seated directly opposite him, pretended not to hear.'

There was another incident. Kmoch: 'One day, when a high officer in a Nazi uniform entered the press room, Nimzovich brusquely demanded to see his credentials. The other reporters, including myself, were horrified, expecting the Nazi to react violently after receiving such an order from a Jew. But, amazingly, nothing happened. The officer simply left.'

COURTESY ROLAND NIMZOWITSCH AND VALERY BEZPROZVANNY

**A postcard, showing Nimzowitsch in front of a demoboard, that he sent to his mother on 25 January 1922.**

This story does not suggest that Nimzowitsch was crazy, and certainly not that he was pretending to be crazy, as Tartakower had it. He seems to have lived in a world of his own.

## Mystery of over-protection

I don't remember exactly at what age I first read Nimzowitsch's *Mein System*. For me, at first there were Mieses and Dufresne, then there was Euwe, then Tarrasch and then Nimzowitsch.

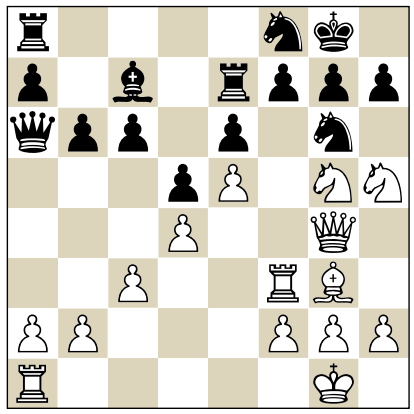
I think I read Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch not in the first place as teachers, but mainly as storytellers, though I tried to get as much instruction from them as I could. Euwe and Tarrasch were clear and relatively easy, Nimzowitsch was difficult, and of course that was part of his attraction.

I liked the firm title, 'My System'. Who wouldn't like to have a system to beat his helpless victims? Much later I was to learn the amusing fact that the title might have been an echo of that of a book by a certain Jørgen Peter Müller about physical exercises.

In his book about the tournament of Carlsbad 1929, one of his finest victories, Nimzowitsch wrote that three months before the tournament he had taken up Müller's exercises and that they had dispelled all his lingering fears and worries and thereby also the little psychological crises that in the past had hampered his successful career. So you see what a system can do.

Nimzowitsch's own system had some mysterious aspects, such as the concept of over-protection. For instance after 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5, White might arrange his pieces like this: ♘f3, ♗f4, ♕g3, ♖e1, a marvellous over-protection of the strongpoint e5. But wasn't it also a blatant violation of the principle of economy of means? What were all these pieces doing except piling up at e5?

Nimzowitsch's rather abstruse explanation was that the pieces had done a good deed by over-protecting e5, and that they were rewarded by the fact that e5 had become a point of energy that supplied these pieces with great vitality. As an illustration he gave a diagram, with the caption 'Career of the over-protectors'.



**Nimzowitsch-Giese, Riga 1913**
position after 20...♖e7

The overprotectors have indeed done well, but from the diagram one gets the distinct impression that while they were working on their career, the pieces of Nimzowitsch's student Ernst Giese had been sleeping.

In 1927 the *Wiener Schachzeitung* published some parodies on the annotations of famous grandmasters. For instance, a lifeless short draw was given with no notes at all and only the indication 'annotations by Bogoljubow', who as an annotator was indeed known for his laziness.

By far the most famous of these parodies, often translated and reprinted, is Hans Kmoch's beautiful article *A Masterly Example of My System*, which presents the 'Immortal Over-protection Game' Nimzowitsch-Systemsson. The game starts with 1.e4 e6 2.h4!!, a move that introduces a manoeuvre to over-protect the pawn on e5 (not yet there, but soon to come) by h5, h6, ♕h5 and ♕h2. Of course it was a joke and it seems that Nimzowitsch appreciated the joke, but it was only a grotesque exaggeration of Nimzowitsch's serious experiments such as 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.♕g4, with the intention to overprotect e5 with ♕g3.

## Heated polemics

I was young when I read *Mein System* and therefore I liked polemics, which means that for me the highlight was the attack on Tarrasch, the hard-hitting article from the *Wiener Schachzeitung* of 1913 that, only slightly mellowed, was included in *Mein System*. Looking at this article with a modern eye, we can say that Nimzowitsch was not always right. No, he wasn't right when he held that after 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 the move 3.♘c3 is a mistake. But all in all, he defended a richer and more subtle view on opening strategy than Tarrasch's dictums did. He made chess more interesting.

Soon after Nimzowitsch's attack on Tarrasch the Russian master Semyon Alapin joined the discussion on the pages of the *Wiener Schachzeitung*. To calm the heated discussion the magazine's editor Georg Marco wrote in an introduction to Alapin's article that the author should be forgiven for his strong language by the heat of the fight.

## Hans Ree

Alapin declared himself a friend of Nimzowitsch's and an opponent of Tarrasch, but he reproached both that they were playing philosopher with high-flown generalities without backing up their words of wisdom with concrete variations. People were too much in thrall of words, thought Alapin. They created strings of empty words that gave an illusion of understanding. Alapin himself did indeed give variations, almost 20 pages' worth.

Nimzowitsch's answer came promptly in a short article with the sarcastic title: *Steinitz, Tarrasch, Me and...Alapin!* He praises the wisdom of Steinitz, whose insights were diluted by Tarrasch for easy use, and he goes on: 'And so many years went by and Tarrasch's fame as Praeceptor remained untouched. But in silence there lived and searched one who loved the truth in chess and strived to discover her eternal, never-changing laws in a hard struggle. And this man – was I.' (...)

'And now something funny appears. On a good day someone counters me with the attempt to refute my laws – with variations!! But when Mr. Alapin, for he was this hero, believed that I and my laws would be deadly wounded by variations, one can only be astonished by the naivety of this variation artist.'

There went Alapin down the drain. He was a weaker player than Nimzowitsch, but his position – don't rely on words but back up your philosophies with concrete variations – is much closer to us than Nimzowitsch's search for eternal laws. Nowadays every strong chess player is a pragmatist.

### A time of upheavals

Invoking an elusive concept as the *Zeitgeist* puts one on a slippery slope, but it is certainly true that fundamental discussions about the foundations of many disciplines were everywhere in the air in 1920s. In art and in science there were great upheavals and in philosophy there was the struggle between the traditional metaphysicians and the logical positivists from Vienna, a hotbed of artistic and intellectual revolutions.

As Nimzowitsch had studied mathematics in his youth, he was probably aware of the great philosophical debate in mathematics, between formalists and intuitionists. This was not about technical points, but about fundamental questions such as: What is mathematics really? Are mathematical concepts and laws created by man or do they express a truth that would exist independently of us, or are they just strings of signs with only an internal consistency?

The sometimes bitter struggles about the foundations of mathematics have become a part of history with little relevance to contemporary mathematical work. Like chess players, modern mathematicians are pragmatic. If it works, it's fine.

The era of Nimzowitsch was a time of great ambitions and great expectations. We are more practical now, and maybe a bit duller. ■

Charles Hertan

# Forcing Moves

## The Purist

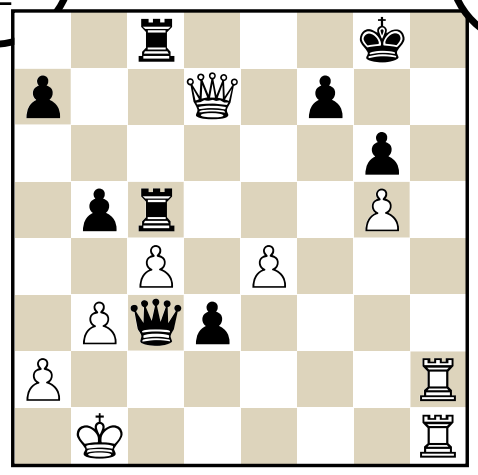
Each generation produces just a few elite players with the courage and skill to fight for a win every game. Deservedly they become fan favourites. Most GMs succumb to the devil's bargain and lean on technique, but aesthetically we relish a full-blooded battle. Judit Polgar is the only woman ever to contend for the world title, but if players were ranked for style and beautiful games, she'd rate even higher than her peak (2735, 8th in the world). Judit dazzled as a great prodigy: 12½/13 on Board 2 at the 1988 Women's Olympiad in Thessaloniki (age 12!), (then) youngest GM ever at 15. Dismissing traditional notions like Kasparov's 'No woman can sustain a prolonged battle', she cut her teeth against the best, notching crushing wins against every active world champion of our time. In rapid play her tactical genius shines brightest; who else had the talent to beat Anand and Kasparov like babies (as Black in a Sicilian, as White in a Berlin Defence)?

For each problem, the goal is to find the quickest and clearest winning line unless otherwise noted. A 'winning line' could range from checkmate to being a pawn up with no objective compensation for the opponent.

**Level of difficulty:**
1-4 stars, 1 is 'easiest' and 4 'most difficult'. The star rating refers to the difficulty of finding all the relevant variations, not just finding the right key move.

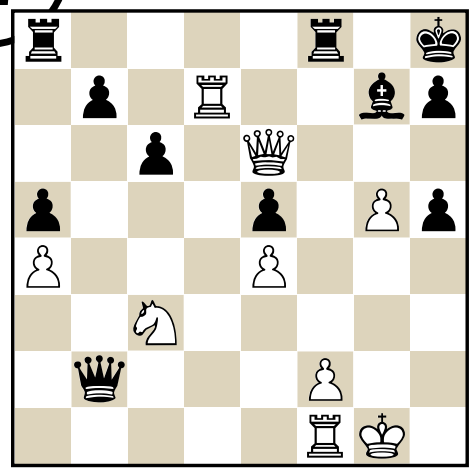
**Solutions on page 97**

1 ★★½☆



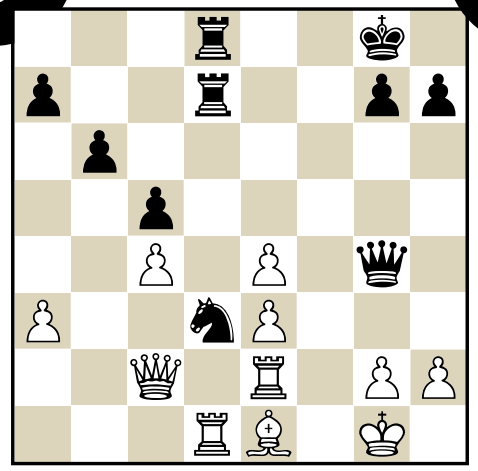
**White to move and win**

2 ★★½☆



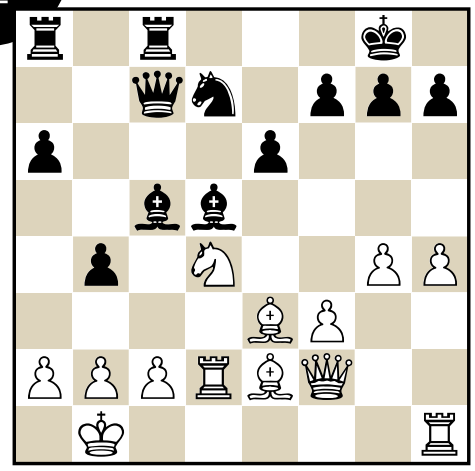
**White to move and win**

3 ★★½☆



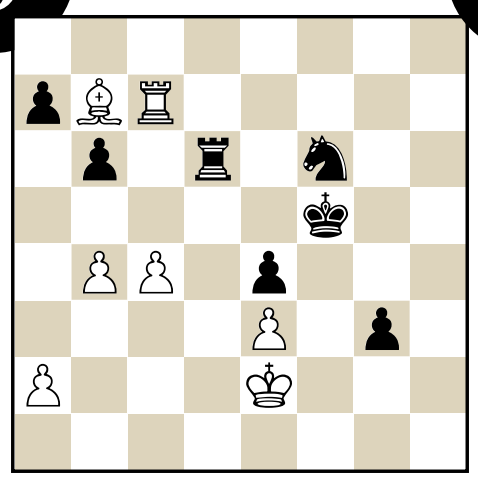
**Black to move and win**

4 ★★½☆



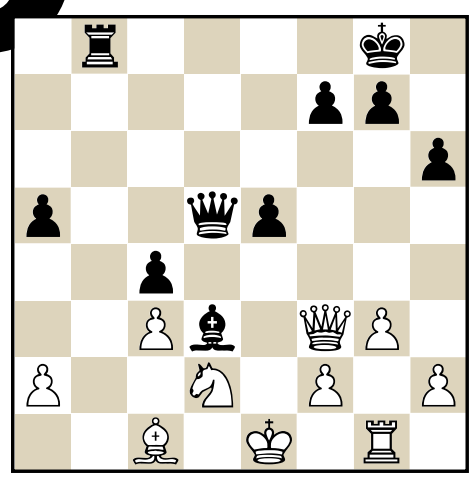
**Black to move and win**

5 ★★½☆

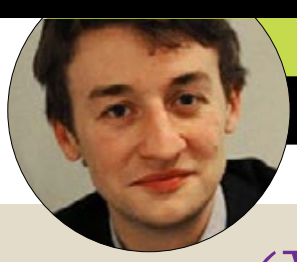


**Black to move and win**

6 ★★★½



**Black to move and win**

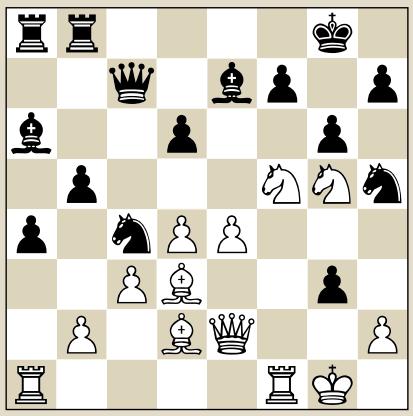




# ‘What do we learn, Palmer?’

**Luke McShane**

Here’s a position from the middlegame of Polgar-Gelfand, from the 2009 World Cup, after Polgar’s 21.♘h4-f5. Gelfand had won the first game, and Polgar was faced with the unenviable task of breaking down Gelfand’s solid Petroff Defence in the second game of their knockout match.



**Polgar-Gelfand**
Khanty-Mansiysk 2009 (3.2)

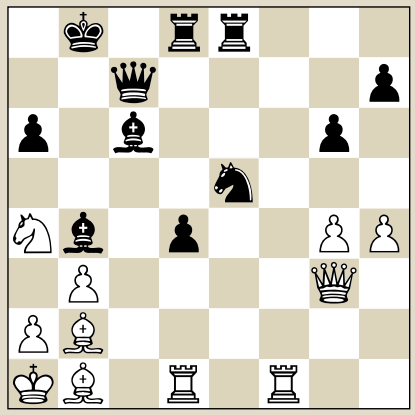
Instead, she chose the bishop’s opening and reached this position, going on to win a stylish game. The pawn on e5, which has captured twice to get to g3, reminded Judit of her favourite childhood opening, the King’s Gambit. As she admits, ‘I eventually lost the playoff, but this did not spoil the magic: it felt like for a moment the Judit from 1988 who many (including myself) had forgotten, had come back to deliver her trademark brilliancies.’ That feeling inspired her to follow through on the idea of writing a book of best games, and her new book, *Judit Polgar – How I beat Fischer’s record*, looks like being the first in a series of three published by Quality Chess. Fischer’s record refers to receiving the GM title at the age of 15, and this first book primarily covers Judit’s younger games up to 1991.

The structure is rather unusual, as the book is presented as a ‘training manual’ rather than a typical collection of games. This is not the sort of training manual with exercises or a detailed program for improvement. Rather, the games are presented to emphasize their instructional value. I was browsing through the *chesscafe.com* website the other day, and came across a question addressed to Bruce Pandolfini in his column, introduced as follows: ‘I am teaching my eight-year-old grandson to play chess, and he loves going over games from the Polgar book. (We call it the “Grandpa Book” because it is big and fat). I read out the notation, and he makes the moves for his (the winning) side, while I play out the losing side and we discuss what is going on.’ I expect many readers would wish to use this book in a similar way, although it is by no means exclusively aimed at children – simply that the young reader has been kept in mind throughout, and indeed there is a noticeable sense of nostalgia, as Judit not only narrates, but casts her mind back to her younger self.

The games are typically annotated gently and accessibly, with far more explanations than variations. I liked the fact that the first chapter (called ‘Tricks’) is a simple celebration of her youthful trickiness – a feature shared by many other young players. The subsequent chapters are based around progressively more complicated middlegame themes, such as zwischenzugs, piece domination, and attacking without queens, and the increasingly complex ideas make for a broadly chronological development of the book.

The unusual upbringing of the Polgar sisters is well known, but this book is not meant as a critique of that, although it is both personal and reflective. In fact, the impression is simply very positive – that chess was fun, and threw many opportunities their way. There are plenty of charming photos and anecdotes sprinkled throughout, and Judit often discusses the ways in which her training gradually shaped her play. At one point she comments, ‘Maybe here is the best place to say that I consider myself fortunate because my early approach to chess was focused on its artistic aspects, thanks to my father’s and first trainers’ deep feeling for beauty in chess. I also must confess that I used to greatly enjoy my opponents’ instant reactions when they were mated in what they thought was a favourable position. This was reliable proof that I had just managed to create something original!’

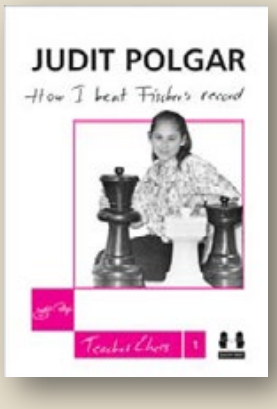
Judit often discusses the psychological aspects of the game – the small considerations that made her choose one line over another, or how she might approach a position differently nowadays. Here is quite a typical comment from her game against Tolnai.



**Tolnai-Polgar**
Budapest 1991 (9)

**30...♗xa4!** ‘I am surprised to find out from my scoresheet that I played

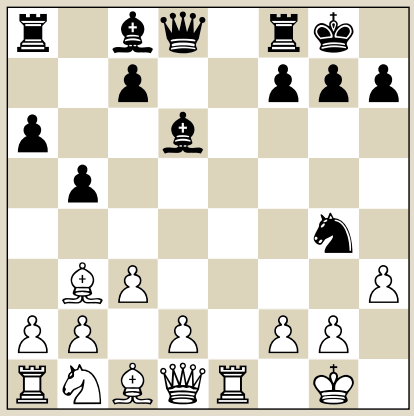
this highly committal move after just two minutes. Psychologically, I entirely approve of my decision, which justifies the exclamation mark awarded to the move. The ensuing endgame allows me to play for a win without any risk, meaning that I could fight for the title with the norm in my pock-




**How I Beat Fischer's Record**
Judit Polgar
Quality Chess, 2012

et... Objectively, 30...d3 would have been stronger, but the position would have been more difficult to control.' **31.bxa4 ♗c3 32.♗xc3 ♕xc3+ 33.♕xc3 dxc3** and Black won.

This example is taken from a chapter devoted to decisive games – those which were particular important for Judit's early career. Interestingly, Tukmakov's new book *Modern Chess Preparation* features a chapter on such key games as well. I really like this book, but it's worth mentioning that it is written just as much as a history of chess preparation as a guide to how to prepare in the modern day. About a third of the book covers the development of opening methods from the world's top players (back to Steinitz), a third to the modern computer era and the impact that has had, and a third on those key games already mentioned. Tukmakov brings an interesting perspective to this discussion, having been a top Soviet grandmaster in the pre-computer era, as well as a coach and captain in the present day. For example, he discusses the features which gave the much vaunted Soviet Chess School its edge over the rest of the world, and how those came across in the games of its champions. It's not so much that Tukmakov is propounding a certain theory, nor do I always agree with his characterizations of the players, which are often expressed in generalizations too broad for my taste.



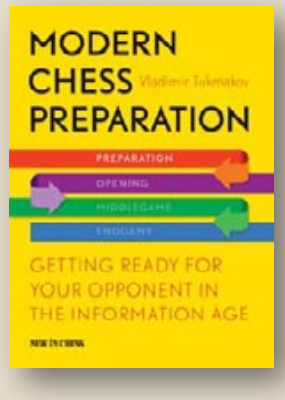
**Capablanca-Marshall**
position after 13...♘g4
New York Manhattan Chess Club 1918

**14.♕f3** Tukmakov attaches an exclamation mark to this move, but the comment is rather baffling. 'Capablanca had no need to calculate complex variations like 14.hxg4 ♕h4 15.♕f3 ♗h2+ 16.♔f1 ♗xg4 17.♕e4 ♗f4! 18.g3 ♕h2!, with a decisive attack for Black. He simply sensed what researchers spent decades studying.' **14...♕h4 15.d4 ♘xf2 16.♖e2 ♗g4 17.hxg4 ♗h2+ 18.♔f1 ♗g3 19.♖xf2 ♕h1+ 20.♔e2 ♗xf2 21.♗d2 ♗h4** and White went on to win.

I don't doubt that Capablanca's intuition was a great strength, but since his thirteenth move was h2-h3, promptly met by 13...♘f6-g4, it seems scarcely credible that Capablanca declined the knight sacrifice on intuition alone, except perhaps out of respect for his opponent's abilities (which is not quite the same thing). Moreover, I'm quite sure that he was capable of calculating the line above and picking a different move. All in all, it is an odd choice of example, especially as Marshall's innovation is one that turned out to be so enduring.

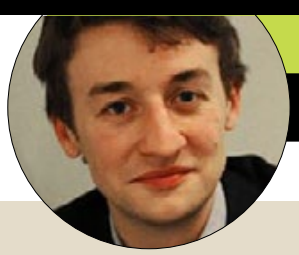
Nevertheless, this is a minor criticism, and the games were well chosen to convey how the cutting edge of preparation developed over the decades, and just what the top players brought to their games. (That includes not only world champions; a couple of games focused on Lev Polugaevsky's contribution, and Tukmakov draws upon some of his own games for some interesting examples as well). Even more important, Tukmakov narrates this development with a sense of humour, so we are introduced to inebriated opponents, or what to do when your preparation appears simultaneous on another board in the same tournament hall.

In the modern era, many grumbling words have been written about how computers are destroying chess, but the reality is much more complicated than that, as attested to by the variety of examples which Tukmakov has included. Apart from the fact that many of the games are so obviously rich in ideas, these days it is rather rare for a computer innovation to decide a game at top level. Players know very well these days, that if they are heading for a sharp variation, they had better check the tactics very thoroughly. Games are won not by novelties that overturn assessments, but by players who notice that a particular line calls for a particularly precise response, and then prepare them deeply, counting on their opponent struggling to find the antidote over the board. At other times, a




**Modern Chess Preparation**
Vladimir Tukmakov
New In Chess, 2012

novelty is not even conspicuously dangerous, but gives one player a practical edge. As Tukmakov writes about one of the games: 'At first glance the theoretical novelty didn't play such a significant role – after all, White's advantage after the opening seemed only symbolic. However, the psychological initiative was on Ponomariov's side right from the outset and he was better prepared than his opponent for the character of the ensuing position.' My favourite





description from this book observes that it is not always the objectively best moves which are favoured by grandmasters. Instead, they are compared to those 'scouring scruffy flea markets in search of hidden treasures' to be polished at home. Tukmakov's discussion of the modern game is highly astute, in my view, and he also draws attention to an important phenomenon I have experienced myself: 'Strangely enough, it can be easier to an extent for the player who "gets caught out by a variation": he's balancing on the edge of the abyss and can save himself only at the cost of extreme effort. He doesn't know at which point his opponent's home analysis will end, so whenever his opponent heads out onto the open seas he's already fully mobilized and ready to solve the most complex of puzzles. In contrast, the player who's "leading" can't immediately adapt to the new mode, and during the time taken for him to readjust the fruits of months of work are often ruined. For example, in the game we looked at, Kasimdzhanov almost let the win slip away, but his tired opponent wasn't able to exploit his chances.'

Still, Tukmakov's prescription for the modern amateur is to turn away from the computer as much as possible. He advocates analysing your games without it, except perhaps to check for blunders. Although I can see the merits of that approach, I have rarely tried to seriously analyse one of my own games without a computer, except in a post-mortem with other players. The fact is that one of the most useful ways to evaluate your play is to see where the main turning points were, whether you missed them, and how objective was your assessment of the game's progression. With a game fresh in the mind, a quick look with the engine can help identify roughly what (if anything) you got wrong. Analysing without it is a great idea but yields a very different benefit.

Tukmakov is less clear on what role the computer should play in an amateur's preparation, but Matthew Sadler expressed a frank opinion on that score in his new book *Study Chess with Matthew Sadler*. 'When I was a professional chess player, I spent most of my effort after a bad result analysing my preparation for the tournament. I reasoned that as a full-time professional, I had every opportunity to ensure that I arrived for a tournament in top-top condition. If I played like a drain, then I had obviously made some mistakes in the run-up to the tournament. As an amateur, your preparation is always going to be appalling. The week at work before a tournament will mostly be spent rushing around trying to round things off so that you can take a couple of weeks off without causing too many problems. There's no point getting upset about that (unless you fancy a good whinge). It's much more important to understand how that's going to affect your chess, and

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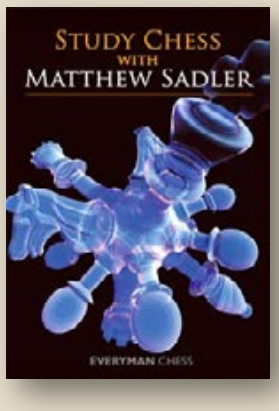
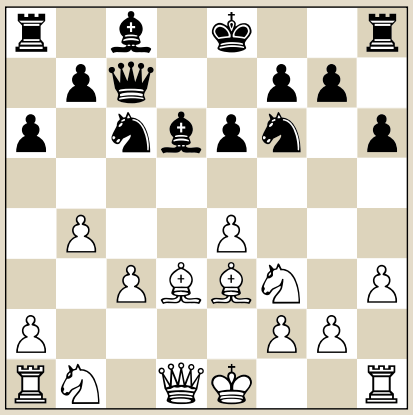
how you can best compensate for low energy or lack of focus (especially at the beginning of tournaments).' As a non-professional player, I know the truth of this all too keenly, and this probably gives me or Matthew an advantage which most amateurs do not have. I have occasionally been very well prepared, but even when I am not, the awareness of that handicap can be surprisingly useful, and certainly preferable to a naïve overconfidence.




**Study Chess with Matthew Sadler**
Matthew Sadler
Everyman Chess, 2012

Sadler's has not been a professional player for some time, but a couple of years ago he began playing again, with great success. In some ways this book reads as an account of that experience, as Sadler talks us through topics such as how he started looking for new ideas in the opening (without a computer!). There is a convincing explanation of the way in which his experience in both the Najdorf and Queen's Gambit Accepted inspired him in the following position:



**Van Oosterom-Sadler**
Haarlem 2010

**10...g5!** Advancing this pawn to g4 generated quick counterplay around the e5-square, and Black won a nice miniature.

It is a short book, not particularly dense, and the topics feel like they are selected somewhat on a whim, but Sadler's honesty above all made it a very worthwhile read for me. For example, Sadler explains that at some point in his life, his rather limited repertoire compelled him to head for some very sharp positions. It wasn't that he couldn't handle them at all, but after some bad experiences, he came to understand that some days just call for a different approach, and that there is nothing cowardly or unprincipled in responding to the way one feels. He describes a particularly bad experience: 'I still remember looking at my position after move 9. I did not want those weaknesses; I didn't want to have to fight already to build up an initiative to compensate for my doubled pawns. In short, I was destroying myself'. Sadler explains in considerable detail how he succeeded in expanding his repertoire, and includes many unconventional openings. His enthusiasm for these is quite infectious, and it's worth bearing in mind that the annotations to many of these games are not intended so much as an objective analysis of the moves' merits, as an explanation of the attitude that goes with them. Towards the end of the book, he adopts a more sombre tone, as he analyses, with great thoroughness, some of his key mistakes from a disappointing performance at the Wijk aan Zee C group earlier this year.

He begins that chapter with a quote from the Coen brothers' *Burn After Reading*, which brilliantly sums up the impotence we can feel after a bad event:

'What do we learn, Palmer?

'I don't know sir.'

'I don't know either. I guess we learn not do do it again.'

'Yes sir.'

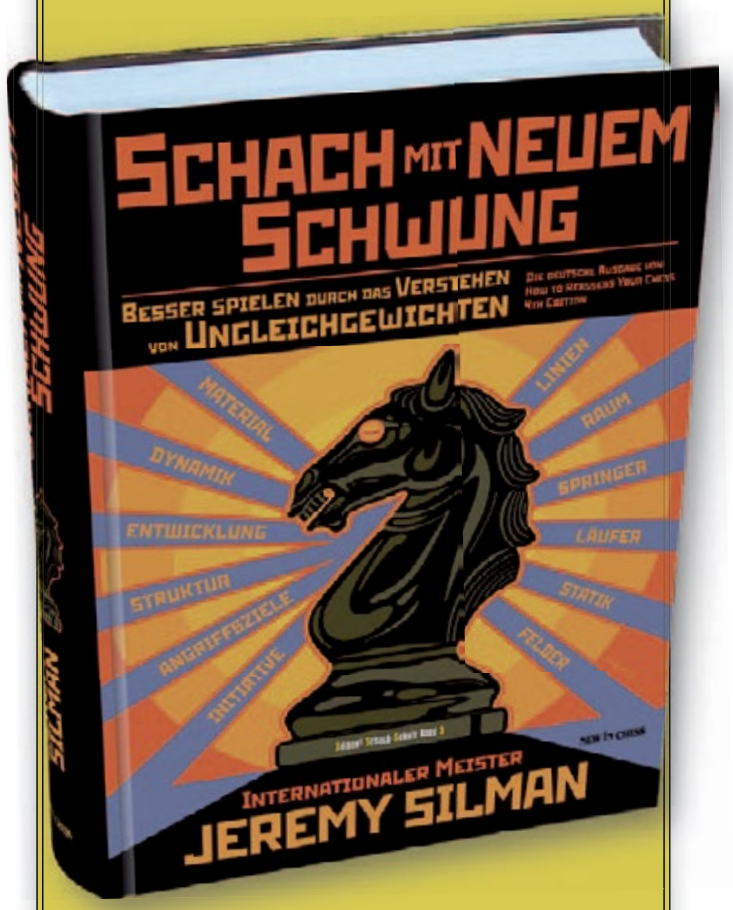
'I'm f7%$#d if I know what we did.'

'Yes sir, it's... hard to say.'

But in that same chapter Sadler makes a tremendous and exemplary attempt at constructive self-criticism, and there is a great deal to learn from his experience. He'll be back! ■

NEU!

**Endlich auf Deutsch erhältlich**

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NEW IN CHESS

Jan Timman

# The grand old man of Yugoslav chess

Some time ago, Max Withuis, the son of chess organizer and press chief Berry Withuis, told me a remarkable story. During one of the IBM tournaments of the 1960s Svetozar Gligoric, together with another Yugoslav grandmaster, had decided to look up the press chief in his home in the Witte de Withstraat in Amsterdam West. The Yugoslavs found only Max at home, listening to pop music with some friends. Gligoric loved the music and spontaneously offered to act as disc jockey.

I thought this a heart-warming story. Gligoric had been born in 1923 and represented a different generation. Yet he loved pop music. Gligoric was fond of music in general. When he was well over 80, he started composing music and even made an album called 'How I survived the 20th century' filled with twelve compositions in different genres such as blues and jazz. Shortly before he died, he was also occupied with music. In late May he sent an email to Edward Winter, who writes about this in *Chess Notes*: '... He [Gligoric] mentioned that he was particularly busy and that, as a writer of music and lyrics, he was hurrying to publish his second album in July.'

On August 14th he died of a heart attack.

Gligoric's love of music fitted in the tradition of great postwar chess players: Smyslov, Portisch and not forgetting Tal, who was an accomplished pianist, as was Gligoric. In 1984 and 1985 he was chief arbiter at the endless first match between Karpov and Kasparov. How did he spend his time during all those months in Moscow? In an interview with *New In Chess*(1989/3) he explains that he had asked the organizer for an apartment with a piano. He had only learnt to play a year earlier, when he was 60, without a teacher.

**'Gligoric beat all postwar World Champions until Spassky at least twice.'**

Remarkably enough, Gligoric said in the same interview that he did not work very hard at chess; no hours of thorough opening preparation like Portisch used to do. He was in the habit of looking at positions and understanding in five minutes what was going on. Only people with an enormous talent will be able to get far with such an attitude.

Gligoric grew up in poverty in prewar Yugoslavia. His father died when he was still a little child, and, as so many great chess players, he was brought up by his mother. She had no affinity at all with chess, so that Gligoric concentrated on the game in utter loneliness. He made his first chess set from the corks of wine bottles. However poor they were in prewar Yugoslavia, they did drink wine.

At 20 years of age, when World War II had been going on for three years, Gligoric joined the Partisans. He fought in the frontline and was later awarded a medal for his bravery.

Yet those war years were bad for him: his chess career had come to a standstill. Precisely in the years needed to get to the top, he had not been able to play.

In 1951, Gligoric was made a grandmaster. This was not based on norms in those days, but was decided by a vote in the FIDE congress. An interesting detail: not the Yugoslav chess federation but FIDE President Folke Rogard had nominated him.

During the 1950s, Gligoric developed into the strongest non-Soviet player. A good illustration was his fourth place in the great Moscow tournament of 1956. With 10 out of 15, he trailed Botvinnik and Smyslov, the glorious winners, by just one point. He beat all postwar World Champions until Spassky at least twice. His score against Botvinnik was his best: 2-2, with six draws. That they only played 10 games against one another was because Botvinnik played in very few tournaments while he was World Champion. Gligoric also beat Tal twice, but his wins were offset by eight defeats. Tal and Spassky (whom he never beat and lost against seven times) were difficult opponents for him. His kind of play was far more effective against Smyslov and Petrosian. Smyslov he beat five times, against nine defeats. His most spectacular score was

NEW IN CHESS ARCHIVES

**According to Svetozar Gligoric the majority of people have their psychological peak between age 30 and 37, 38. 'That's when you are perfect.'**

against Petrosian: 12-8 for the World Champion, with 21 draws. Gligoric must have had an exceptional talent to be able to force the peace-loving tiger to fight!

Remarkably enough, Gligoric never got far in the world championship cycle (something that also applied to Ljubojevic later). In 1968 it seemed that he would finally break through when halfway his match against Tal he was a point ahead, but in the second half of the match he collapsed. I have a possible explanation for Gligoric's failure to do well in the world championship cycle: he did not depend on his results for his living. During tournaments he did a lot of journalistic work. In such a case it is not easy to find the extra motivation and concentration that world championship candidates need to have.

In the interview with *New In Chess*, Gligoric advanced a remarkable thesis: 'It is my theory that man, the majority of people, have their peak, their psychological peak, between age thirty and thirty-seven, thirty-eight. That is when you are perfect. You have energy for everything.'

This credo certainly applied to Gligoric himself. It was only when he was in his 30s that his dynamic play really came into its own.

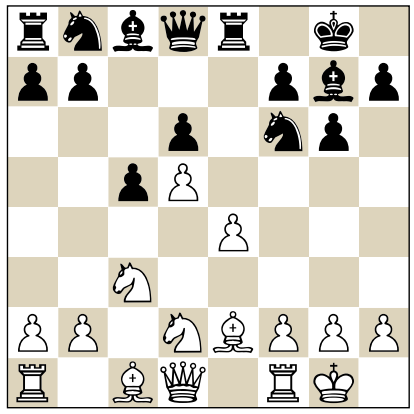
At an even older age, in 1965, he decided to change his opening repertoire as White. Until that time he had varied between 1.e4 and 1.d4, but from 1965 on he opened exclusively with the queen's pawn (except for one game against Olafsson from 1966).

Although Gligoric did not work very hard at chess, he thought the opening very important. His game collection *I Play against Pieces* is organized by opening. With white he built up an impressive repertoire. Tal once said: 'Gligoric has his favourite positions, and when he manages to get them, he creates textbook examples of how to handle them.'

With white, Gligoric had special set-ups against, for example, the Grünfeld Indian and the Benoni. In New In Chess 2012/6, Kavalek describes how he tried a knight move from Fischer in his third match game against Gligoric and lost. But Kavalek played Fischer's move in a slightly different position.

BI 17.6 – A77
**Svetozar Gligoric**
**Lubos Kavalek**
Skopje 1972

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.♘f3 ♗g7 8.♗e2 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.♘d2**



A standard position in the Benoni. In the 1960s the usual move here was 10...♘a6 in order to take the knight to c7 and to aim for the advance ...b7-b5.

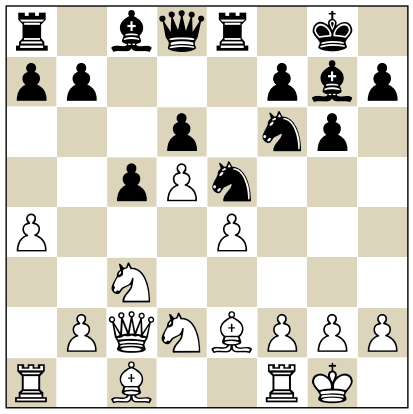
**10...♘bd7**

A more dynamic knight development, which became popular after the game Gligoric-Fischer, Palma de Mallorca 1970.

**11.a4**

Probably the strongest continuation. White not only prevents the advance of the black b-pawn for the foreseeable future, but he is also considering deploying the queen's rook via a3. In Spassky-Fischer, White played the traditional 11.♕c2, after which Fischer struck with 11...♘h5!?.

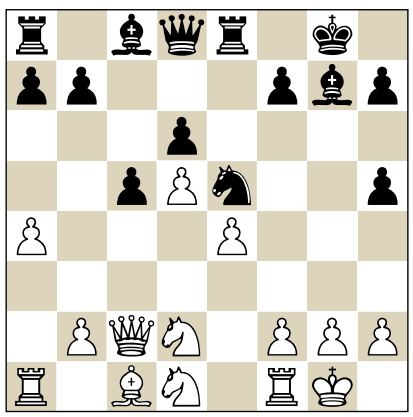
**11...♘e5 12.♕c2**



**12...♘h5** But in this position, Fischer played 12...g5! against Gligoric, a revolutionary idea at the time. It is not easy for White to exploit the weakness of square f5. The text-move is also playable, though.

**13.♗xh5 gxh5 14.♘d1!**

Gligoric's set-up, which looks strong. The knight is on its way to f5.



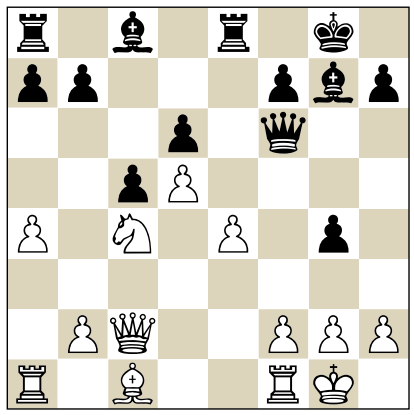
**14...♕h4**

Fischer also played this move in a slightly different position. Here the problem of trying to imitate someone else's play is clearly demonstrated. In the present situation, the queen sortie is not effective.

The critical move is 14...b6, intending to develop the bishop to a6. The position after 15.♖a3! (see the comment to White's 11th move) 15...♗a6 16.♖h3 was long regarded as very good for White on the basis of the game Petrosian-Rashkovsky, Moscow 1976, which was convincingly won by White. But when the computer starts getting involved, things tend to change. In Korotylev-Novikov, Moscow 2007, Black postponed the capture of the rook. With 16...h4! 17.♘e3 ♗d3!, intending not to take on f1 until after 18.♕d1, Black managed to get sufficient counterplay.

**15.♘e3 ♘g4 16.♘xg4 hxg4 17.♘c4 ♕f6**

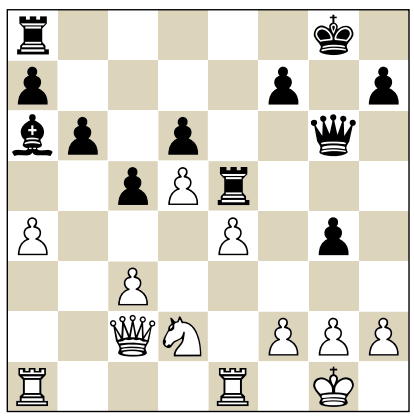
Kavalek is still following Fischer's moves, but the difference is that the white knight is on c4 here instead of on c3.



**18.♗d2!** White is preparing to neutralize the enemy bishop pair.

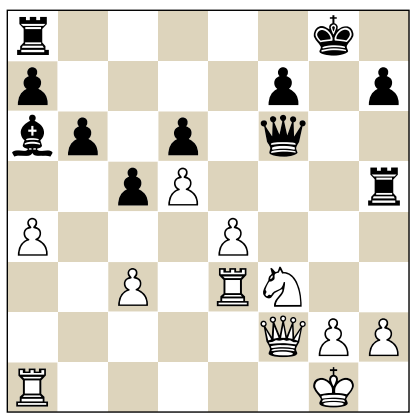
**18...♕g6 19.♗c3 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 b6 21.♖fe1 ♗a6 22.♘d2 ♖e5**

An unfortunate move that only helps White.



**23.f4** Of course. White breaks open the kingside to launch an offensive that will be hard to stop.

**23...gxf3 24.♘xf3 ♖h5 25.♕f2 ♕f6 26.♖e3**



Covering the c-pawn and preparing to double his rooks. Gligoric plays the final part of the game very instructively.

**26...♖e8 27.♖ae1 ♕f4 28.e5 dxe5 29.♖e4 ♕f6 30.♕g3+ ♔h8 31.♘xe5 ♖g8 32.♖g4 ♖xg4 33.♘xg4 ♕g6 34.c4 ♖f5 35.♘h6 ♖f6 36.♖e8+ ♔g7 37.♖g8+ ♔xh6 38.♕h4+** Black resigned.

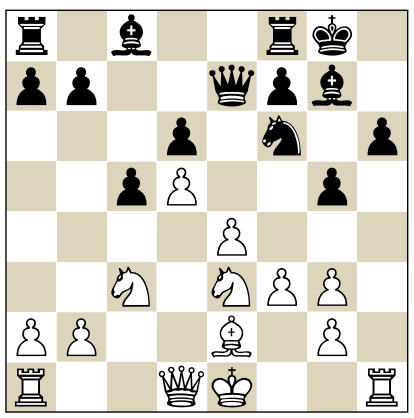
*I Play against Pieces* is notable for the fact that it contains mostly white games. That was Gligoric's main forte. In the majority of his black games, he played the King's Indian against 1.d4. After the war Gligoric quickly followed in Bronstein's and Geller's footsteps by honing the King's Indian into a much-feared weapon. One of his famous wins is that over Petrosian in Rovinj/Zagreb 1970. By means of a long-term piece sacrifice Gligoric managed to clear a path to the black king.

In my youth I was particularly impressed by Gligoric's exchange sacrifices in the King's Indian. They inspired me to follow his example. First there was a game against Donner which, incidentally, is not in *I Play against Pieces* .

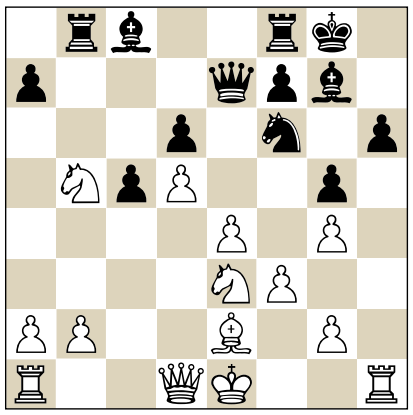
BI 13.4 – A72
**Jan Hein Donner**
**Svetozar Gligoric**
Eersel 1968 (2nd match game)

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗e2 0-0 6.♗g5 c5 7.d5 e6 8.♘f3** After this developing move the play transposes to the Benoni.

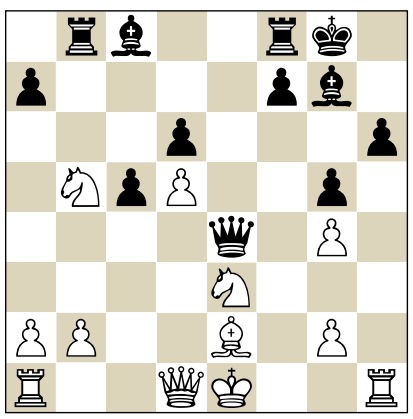
**8...h6 9.♗h4 exd5 10.cxd5 g5 11.♗g3 ♘h5 12.♘d2 ♘xg3 13.hxg3 ♘d7 14.♘c4 ♕e7 15.♘e3 ♘f6 16.f3**



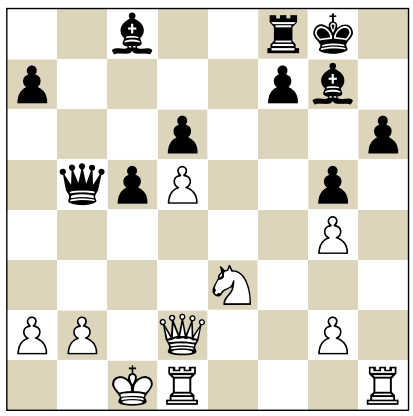
**16...♖b8** With clear intentions. Black wants to advance the b-pawn. In the well-known game Larsen-Fischer, Santa Monica 1966, Black played 16... ♖e8, which move White met slightly artificially with 17.♗b5. Fischer went on to win the game.
**17.g4** Careless, but not at all wrong.
**17...b5** This was inevitable.
**18.♘xb5**



**18...♘xe4** I remember my excitement when I saw this sacrifice for the first time. Black breaks open the position by force, looking for the white king. Objectively speaking, the position is balanced.
**19.fxe4 ♕xe4**



**20.♕d3**
Stronger was 20.♕d2. *Chess Informant* 6 then gives the variation 20...♖xb5 21.♗xb5 ♗d4, but then White can exchange queens with 22.♕d3 and reach a favourable endgame. Better was 20...♖e8. After 21.♖h3 ♗d4 22.♘xd6 ♗xe3 23.♖xe3 ♕xe3 24.♘xe8 ♕xe8 25.0-0-0 White is not at all bad.
**20...♕b4+ 21.♕d2 ♖xb5** Regaining material. **22.♗xb5 ♕xb5 23.0-0-0** This wasn't the first time for Donner to castle against the storm, but here he had little choice. The computer assesses the position as still tenable, but in practice White has little to hope for. Gligoric won easily.

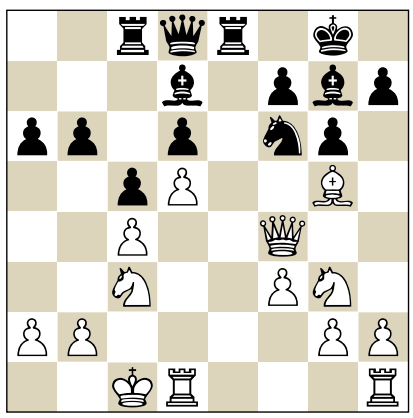


**23...♕a4 24.b3 ♕e4 25.♘c4 ♗xg4 26.♖de1 ♕g6 27.♖hf1 ♗c8 28.♖e7 f5 29.♖xa7 f4 30.♖e1 g4 31.♖a8 f3 32.gxf3 g3 33.♖g1 h5 34.♕g2 h4 35.♖xc8 ♖xc8 36.♕h3 ♕g5+ 37.♔d1 ♖e8**
White resigned.

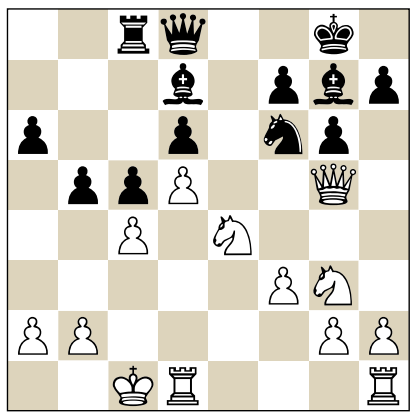
In 1970, I played in the master group of the IBM tournament for the first time, which gave me a chance to see how the great players of the world were doing in the Main Group. I was particularly impressed by a strategic exchange sacrifice by Gligoric.

KI 44.3 – E82
**Vlastimil Hort**
**Svetozar Gligoric**
Amsterdam 1970

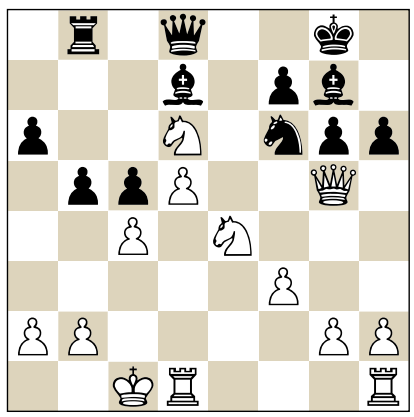
**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♗e3 b6 7.♗d3 a6 8.♘ge2 c5 9.e5 ♘fd7 10.exd6 exd6 11.♕d2 ♘c6 12.♗e4 ♗b7 13.0-0-0 ♘f6 14.♗xc6 ♗xc6 15.♗g5 ♖c8 16.d5 ♗d7 17.♘g3 ♖e8 18.♕f4**



In the Sämisch Variation of the King's Indian, things have not gone according to plan for Black. He is under great pressure. With his next move Gligoric makes a last-ditch attempt to turn the tide, preparing a long-term exchange sacrifice.
**18...♖e5!**
Not only to cover the d-pawn. Black is also getting ready to capture on g5.
**19.♘ce4**
With 19.h4! White could have prevented the exchange sacrifice, after which Black will not have it easy.
**19...♖xg5!**
Black is going to take control of the dark squares.
**20.♕xg5 b5!**

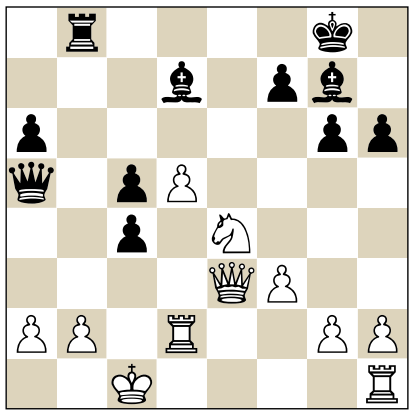


Gligoric doesn't bother to cover the d-pawn. The b-file must be opened as quickly as possible.
**21.♘xd6 ♖b8 22.♘ge4 h6**



**23.♕e3** The wrong square for the queen, although this was difficult to foresee. Stronger was 23.♕h4, with the point that after 23...g5 24.♕f2 ♘xe4 25.fxe4! White will have square f5 for his knight.
**23...♘xe4 24.♘xe4 bxc4 25.♖d2 ♕a5**

# Jan Timman

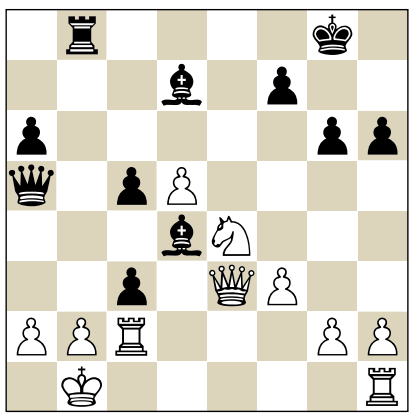


**26.♔b1**

Janosevic gives this move a question mark in *Chess Informant* 10 and recommends 26.♕a3. But this is met by 26...♗xb2+ 27.♕xb2 ♖xb2 28.♖xb2 c3, and despite the reduced material, Black still has a strong attack.

**26...c3 27.♖c2 ♗d4!**

The powerful king's bishop enters the fray.



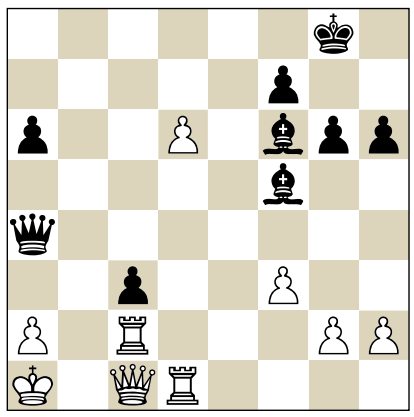
**28.♕e1?**

Again Hort chooses an unfortunate square for the queen. Correct was 28.♕f4 – for tactical reasons it is important to attack the black rook. After 28...♕b4 29.b3 c4 30.♖xc3! ♗xc3 31.♘xc3 ♗f5+ 32.♔b2 White will just be able to hold.

**28...♕a3**

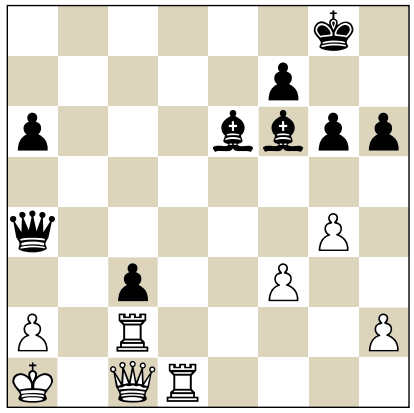
Here it is clearly visible that Gligoric plays with certain set-ups in mind. He is aiming for a position in which he has a powerful bishop pair against two white rooks, ignoring tactical possibilities that might have yielded him an even stronger attack. Black's best move was 28...♗a4, winning back the exchange while maintaining his attack.

**29.♘xc3 ♗f5 30.♔a1 ♖xb2 31.♖xb2 ♗xc3 32.♕c1 c4 33.d6 ♗f6 34.♖d1 c3 35.♖c2 ♕a4**



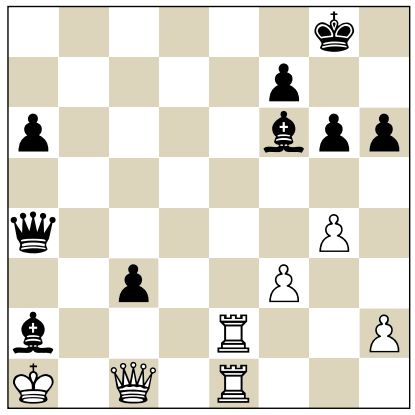
Cool play. The white pawn is stopped on the way.

**36.d7 ♗xd7 37.g4 ♗e6**



**38.♖e1** In time-trouble Hort caves in under the pressure. He should have played 38.♕b1 in order to defend the a-pawn and square b3.

**38...♗b3 39.♖ce2 ♗xa2!**



The triumph of the black bishop pair.

**40.♕xh6 ♗c4+ 41.♔b1 ♗xe2**

White resigned.

Six months later I had another chance to see the top players at work in Wijk aan Zee. I was playing in the master group again, and again Gligoric made a spectacular exchange sacrifice against the same opponent.

SI 9.9 – B99
**Vlastimil Hort**
**Svetozar Gligoric**
Wijk aan Zee 1971

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5 e6 7.f4 ♗e7**

In an earlier game, Gligoric had gone for the Poisoned Pawn with 7...♕b6. Maric-Gligoric, Belgrade 1962, continued as follows: 8.♕d2 ♕xb2 9.♖b1 ♕a3 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♗e2 ♘c6 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.0-0 ♕a5 14.♔h1 ♗e7 15.f5 exf5 16.exf5 ♗xf5 17.♗f3 0-0 18.♗xc6 ♖ac8 19.♗b7 ♖xc3 20.♖xf5

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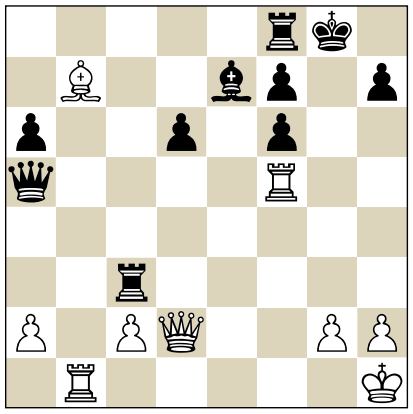
CHESS INFORMANT ARCHIVES

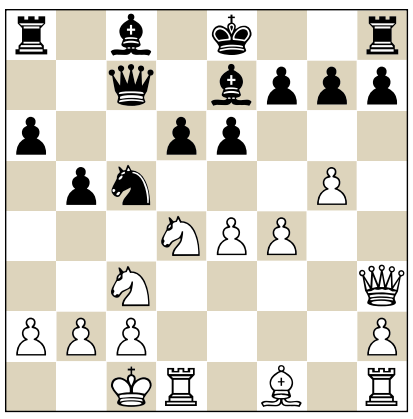
**Svetozar Gligoric at his home in Belgrade in 2005. In his later years music played an increasingly important role in his life. His album *How I Survived the 20th Century* contained compositions in different genres such as blues and jazz.**



QUIZ DIAGRAM

How did Gligoric force an immediate win? The solution is given further down.

**8.♕f3 ♕c7 9.0-0-0 ♘bd7 10.g4 b5 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.g5 ♘d7 13.♕h3 ♘c5**

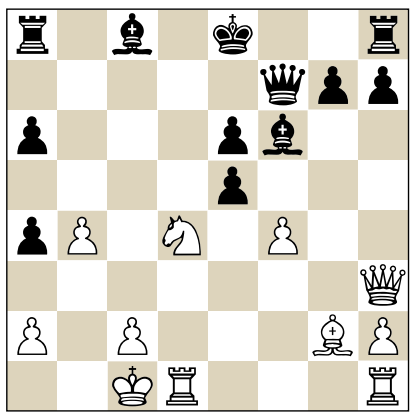


**14.b4** A committal advance that weakens the queenside. But White has an attacking plan in mind.

**14...♘a4 15.♘xa4 bxa4 16.g6 ♗f6!**

The black bishop has reached the long diagonal and will remain active there till the end of the game.

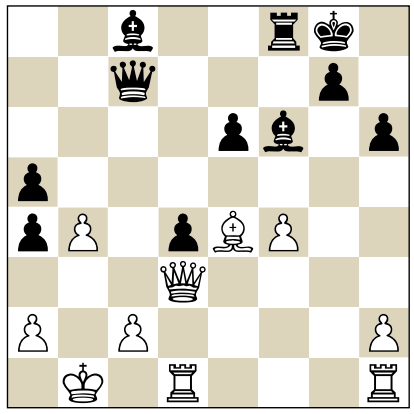
**17.gxf7+ ♕xf7 18.e5 dxe5 19.♗g2**



**19...exd4!**

This cannot have been a surprise for Hort. Black sacrifices the exchange in order to take over the initiative.

**20.♗xa8 0-0 21.♕d3 ♕c7 22.♗e4 h6 23.♔b1 a5**



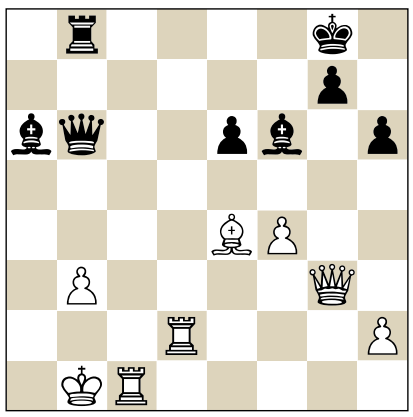
**24.♖hg1?** Gligoric rightly gives this move a question mark. White should have played 24.b5 in order to keep the queenside as closed as possible. After 24...♕c5 25.♗c6 ♕b4+ 26.♔a1 a3 27.♖b1 ♕c5 the position would be dynamically balanced.

With the text-move White tries to launch an attack, but it lacks strength.

**24...axb4 25.♕g3 b3**

Again, Gligoric is playing according to a plan: he sacrifices two pawns to force a way through to the king. In this case it was unnecessary. With 25...♖d8 26.♕g6 ♔f8 he could have sat back to see what White's further plans were. 27.♕h7, for example, would lose after 27...d3.

**26.cxb3 axb3 27.axb3 d3 28.♖xd3 ♗a6 29.♖d2 ♖b8 30.♖c1 ♕b6**



All the black pieces are active, but the white position proves to be surprisingly solid.

**31.♖a2**

This attempt to give the white king extra protection fails, because White now loses control of the d-file. With 31.♕h3 White might have defended himself successfully.

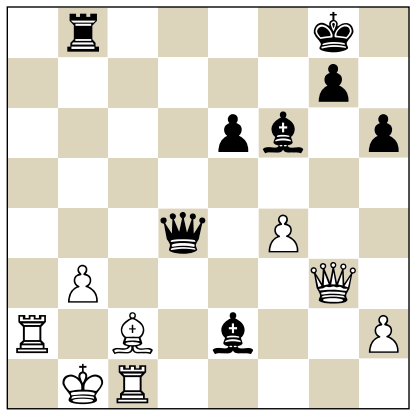
**31...♕d4**

The most energetic move, but not the strongest one. With 31...♖d8! Black could have broken through the enemy defensive lines more quickly. There is no way that White would be able to prevent the sortie to d3.

**32.♗c2**

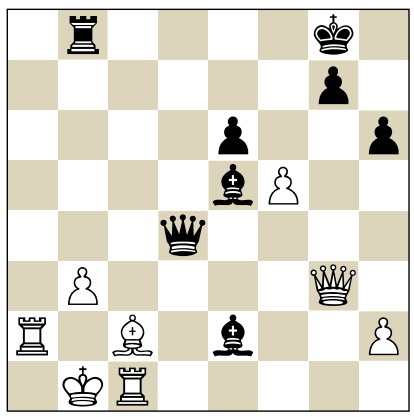
Now the white king has just enough protection.

**32...♗e2**



**33.f5** Hort is fed up with defending and dreams of a counter-attack. But he should have kept his cool with 33.♖e1, when objectively speaking Black has nothing better than 33...♗h4. After 34.♕xh4 ♗d3 35.♖a3 ♗xc2+ 36.♔xc2 ♖c8+ 37.♔b1 ♕d3+ he would have to make a draw through perpetual check.

**33...♗e5**



**34.♕g6?**

White's queen removes itself far from the scene of the battle, after which Black can deal the decisive blow. Correct was 34.♕h3 in order to protect the third rank. Black then retains an advantage with 34...♗g4.

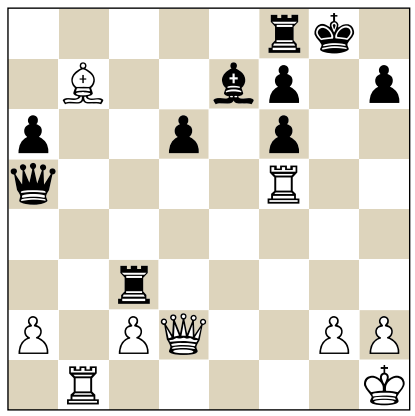
**34...♖xb3+!**

An elegant rook sacrifice to crown Black's attack.

**35.♗xb3 ♕d3+**

White resigned. Regardless of which piece he puts on c2, he will always be mated.

Finally, let us return to the game Maric-Gligoric that was mentioned in the notes to Black's 7th move .



**Maric-Gligoric**
position after 20.♖xf5

With the magnificent 20...♖b3!! Gligoric exploited the fact that White's back rank was unprotected. Maric resigned at once. ■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# Forcing Moves

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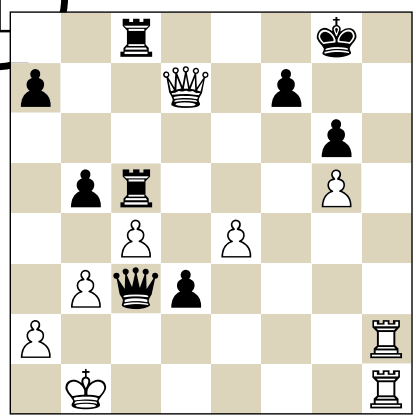
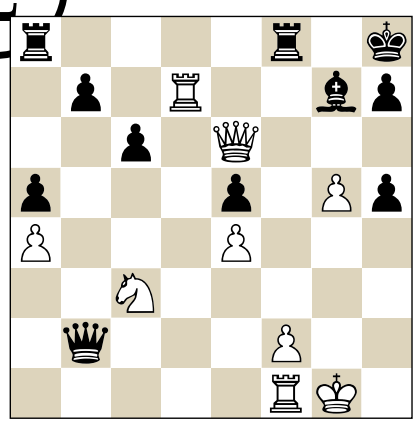
1



**J.Polgar-Kaidanov**
Hilton Head Sicilian theme match 2010

Double-edged positions are Judit's natural element: **1.e5!** ♕**xe5 2.**♖**h7** ♖**5c7** 2...♖f8 3.♕h3+–. **3.**♕**d6!,** a winning deflection blow, with 4.♕f6 to follow. Much cleaner than the spoilsport computer's 1.cxb5. **1-0**

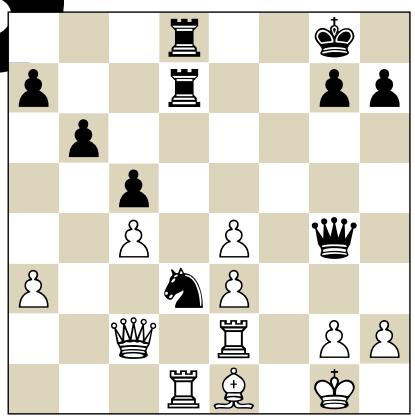
2



**J.Polgar-Bareev**
Elista Candidates' 2007

Polgar's slashing style faltered in Candidates' cycles, but there were always bursts of brilliance: **1.**♖**xg7!** ♔**xg7 2.**♕**h6+** ♔**g8** Or 2...♔f7 3.♖b1!. **3. g6 hxg6 4.**♕**xg6+** ♔**h8 5.**♔**h1!** ♖**f4 6.**♕**xh5+** ♔**g8 7.**♖**g1+** ♔**f8 8.**♕**h8+** ♔**f7 9.**♕**g7+ 1-0**

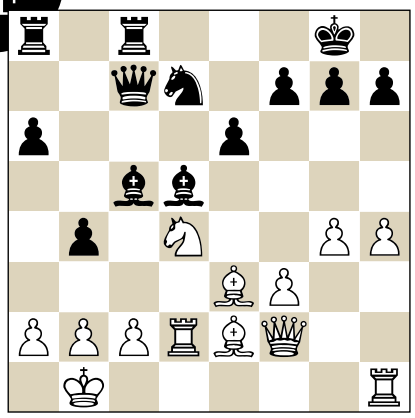
3



**Aleksandrov-J.Polgar**
Dresden Olympiad 2008

**1...**♘**f4! 2.exf4** On 2.♖ed2 most decisive and pretty is 2...♘h3+ 3.♔h1 ♖f8! 4.♗g3 ♘f2+! 5.♗xf2 ♖xf2. **2...** ♖**xd1 3.e5** ♕**xf4 4.e6** ♖**f8 0-1**

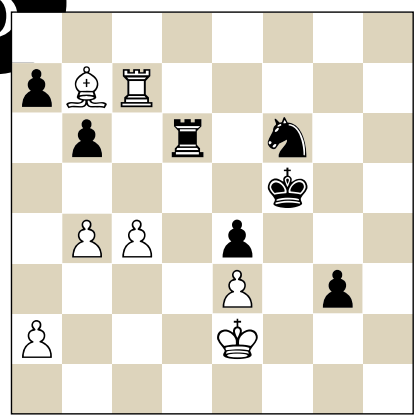
4



**Anand-J.Polgar**
Cap d'Agde rapid 2003

A champion of the Sicilian and King's Indian since her angelic youth (I saw her place a lion figurine by the board for good luck at age 12, while winning the U-2400 section of the New York Open!), Judit shows an almost Kasparovian dexterity with the Sicilian black pieces: **1...**♗**xd4 2.**♗**xd4** ♗**xa2+! 3.**♔**c1** On 3.♔xa2 Black wins simply with 3...b3+ 4.♔xb3 (4.cxb3 ♕a5+) 4...♖ab8+ 5.♔a2 ♕a5+, or brilliantly with 3...♕a5+ 4.♔b3 ♘b6! 5.♗xb6 ♖c3+!. **3...**♗**b3 4.**♔**d1** ♗**xc2+ 0-1**

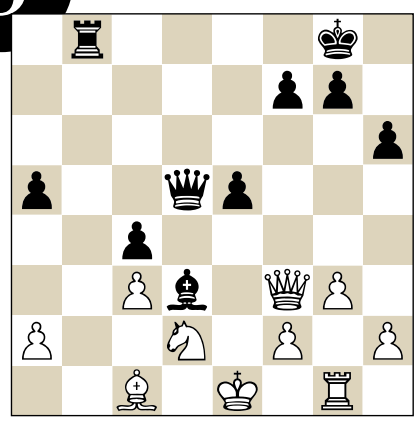
5



**Nikolic-J.Polgar**
Chalkidiki 2002

It's a bit too simplistic to say technique kept her from the crown, as the youngest Polgar has produced many fine endings: **1...**♔**g6! 2.**♗**c8** Avoiding 2.♔f1 ♖d2 3.a4 ♖f2+ 4.♔g1 ♘g4!. **2...** ♖**d2+! 3.**♔**f1** ♖**xa2 4.b5** ♘**h7! 0-1**

6



**Pantsulaia-J.Polgar**
Aix-les-Bains 2011

Three decades into her storied career, the strongest woman ever by a whopping 100 Elo points still prefers to play like Tal: **1...**♖**b1!** Interestingly the computer now has no problem declaring Black the winner, despite limited material and a 2-pawn deficit. **2.**♔**d1** 2.♕d1 ♖a1 is also possible, but how should White play when f3 always loses to ...♕c5? **2...e4 3.**♕**f4** ♖**a1 4.**♕**b8+** ♔**h7 5.g4** ♕**d7 6.**♕**e5 e3 7.fxe3** ♕**a4+ 8.**♔**e1** ♖**xc1+ 9.**♔**f2** ♖**xg1 0-1**

# Natalia Pogonina

**CURRENT ELO:** 2476
**DATE OF BIRTH:** March 9, 1985
**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Vladivostok, Russia
**PLACE OF RESIDENCE:** Saratov, Russia

**What is your favourite colour?**
Blue.

**What food makes you happy?**
Okroshka (a cold soup of Russian origin).

**And what drink?**
Kvass (fermented beverage made from black rye or regular rye bread).

**What was the most interesting book you ever read?**
*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

**What is your all-time favourite movie?**
*Forrest Gump*.

**What is your favourite TV series?**
*Interns* (a Russian sitcom about medical workers).

**Do you have a favourite actor?**
Tom Hanks.

**And a favourite actress?**
Chulpan Khamatova.

**What music do you like to listen to?**
Nowadays mostly Russian rap.

**Do you have a favourite painter or artist?**
Nikolai Rerikh, especially his mountain paintings.

**What was your best result ever?**
I hope it is yet to come. So far – gold at the 2012 Russian Super Final.

**What was the best game you ever played?**
I played two online vote chess matches against the World. The victory with white is very memorable to me. So is the draw with black.

**Who is your favourite chess player of all time?**
Robert James Fischer, for his immense contribution to chess as a game and as an industry.

**Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?**
When I was a child, I was greatly influenced by a book about checkers – *On Black Diagonals* by Iser Kuperman. The tournament atmosphere, travelling, beautiful games...

**What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?**
Morozevich vs. Vachier-Lagrave, Biel, 2009. I know they are both sceptical about the quality of their play, but the game was incredibly exciting to watch!

**What is the best chess country?**
Russia. There are more top chess players than anywhere else, great coaches, decent funding, unmatched tournament coverage, and chess is very popular with the public.

**What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?**
Planning and risk management.

**Do chess players have typical shortcomings?**
Poor eyesight.

**Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?**
A spaceman.

**Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?**
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Yuri Gagarin and Mahatma Gandhi.

**Is there something you'd love to learn?**
Get a license of a plane pilot.

**What is your greatest fear?**
Fear of death.

**If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?**
The role of women in chess: make them more influential, respectable and stronger players.

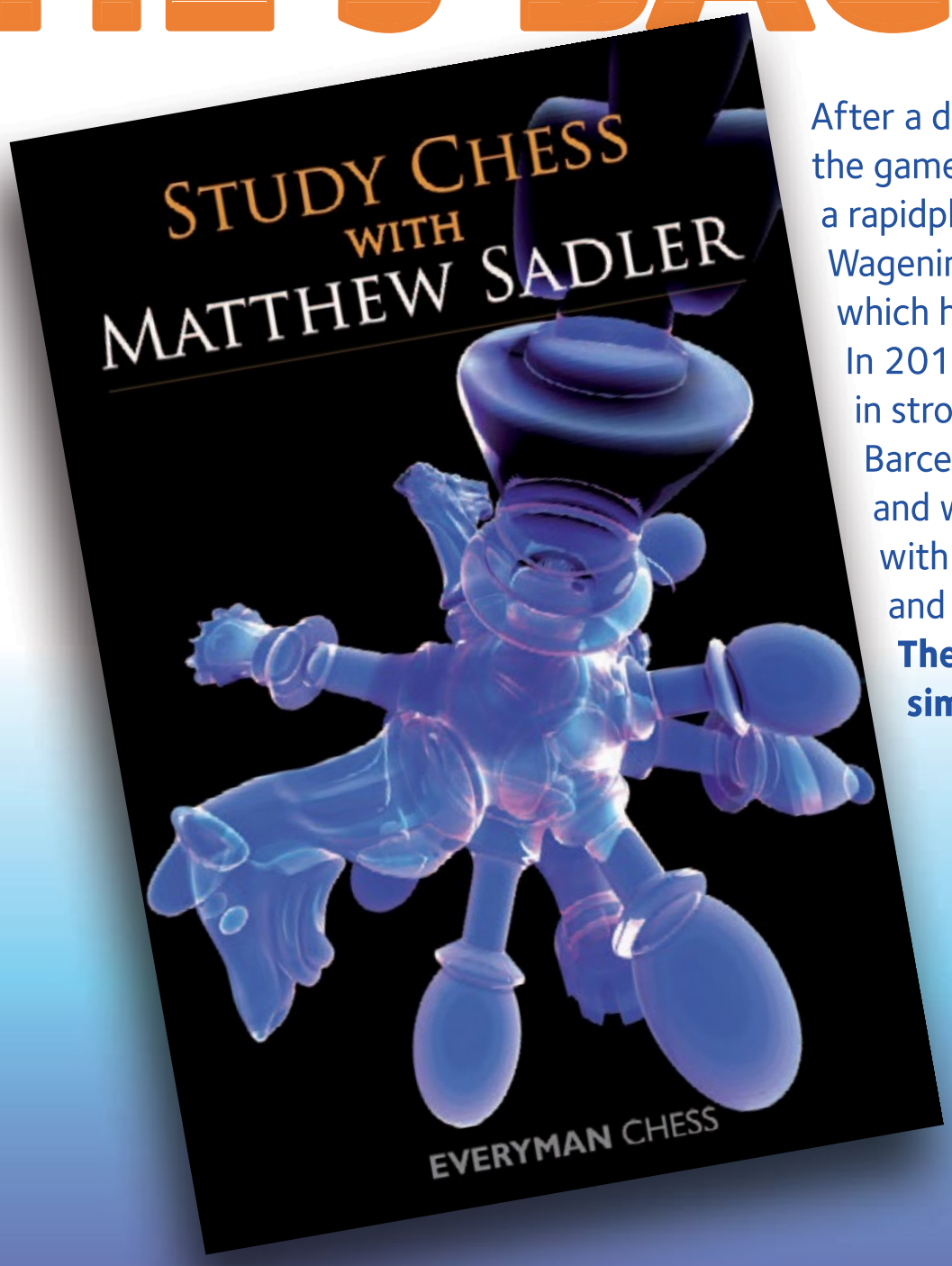
**What is the stupidest rule in chess?**
Some organizers are trying to introduce the football scoring system in chess (3 points per win, 1 per draw, 0 per loss). It is against the conservation laws (why is the same game worth 2 points on some occasions and 3 on others?) and the nature of the game itself: chess is probably a draw. Also, it is a way to provoke foul play, because losing and winning is more rewarding than making two draws.

**What will be the nationality of the 2050 chess world champion?**
He will be a world citizen ☺.

**Is knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?**
Obviously, chess is beneficial for our minds.

**What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?**
'Chess is a combination of sport, science and art' – Mikhail Botvinnik.

# HE'S BACK!




After a decade away from the game Matthew played a rapidplay tournament in Wageningen, Holland in which he won with 7/7. In 2011 he played in strong events at Barcelona and Oslo and won them both with scores of 8½/10 and 8/9 respectively. **These results are simply astounding!**

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